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The Watsons of the Country

BY

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN

Author of "The Watson Girls," "Belinda," "Belinda's Cousins," "Jasper Thorn," "Jack Chumleigh," etc., etc.

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To
My Goddaughter, Anna Hamilton,
of Norfolk, Virginia

The author gratefully acknowledges the kind permission of the Editor of *Ave Maria* to use part of this story which originally appeared in that publication.

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The Watsons of the Country

I

CHANGES

"I'LL take care of both girls!" Mr. William Watson said, when he reached New York and heard that Alice Watson had been left homeless, and that the daughter of an old friend, Richard Harney, was likewise almost alone in the world. His nephew, Robert Watson,—"Bob" of the old days on Capitol Hill,—was at West Point. Clara, his sister, was in France with Amelia Watson, and Alice had been sent by another relative to a very fashionable school in New York;—a school which her uncle did not like at all. He let her stay there awhile, however, because, until he became familiar with his other nieces and nephews at Sweetbrier, he did not know where to place her.

The lives of our old friends, the Watson children, had been saddened by the deaths of their

father and mother. Mr. Watson had gone first, very peacefully in January, and his wife had followed him, praying for her dear children, in March. At this time,—nearly two years ago,—the Watsons were living on their farm. And thus Clara, Alice and Bob were left orphans. At this time Alice had not met her cousins, the Watsons of Rosebrier. She had heard of them from her father and mother, and had sent Christmas gifts regularly. Various presents had come in return; but Alice always thought of the Sweetbrier children as "countrified." This was an adjective which expressed both pity and scorn on her lips. Uncle William liked Alice; she was much younger,—as some girls are,—than her age. Her uncle saw that the lessons taught her by her mother had been hidden by the growth of the weeds, frivolity and selfishness; but he knew that beneath these weeds, the young girl's heart was true and good. He was rich; he felt that he could now help his relatives before deciding on his own vocation, and he determined to take care, not only of Alice, but of Josie Harney.

The Watsons at Rosebrier had heard of Bob, Clara and Alice; but they regarded them as

"city people" and therefore quite benighted! They commiserated all children brought up in crowded streets.

Uncle William loved the bustle of New York for a little while. His eldest brother, the father of Alice, had always liked the cities; but the owner of Rosebrier and himself had preferred the life of the country. The Rosebrier Watsons had been known to their relatives as "The Watsons of the Country." Mr. Watson of Rosebrier and his brother, Will, were Philadelphians by birth. The eldest brother had been born on shipboard during a long ocean trip, and his love for the sea had inspired Bob with a love of the sailor's life, which had, later, changed to a desire for the career of a soldier.

Mrs. Watson,—"of the country,"—as Uncle William called her in his talk with Alice, was likewise a Philadelphian by birth, and Uncle William made Alice laugh by repeating some of her stories of her earlier life and that of older friends in the old-fashioned part of that city, where, according to Longfellow,—

> "All the air is balm, and the peach
> is the emblem of beauty."

"When I go into the country," said Alice, a little patronizingly, "uncle and aunt *must* tell me some of those funny old timey stories."

Uncle William laughed. "Very well," he said, "you can't please them better than by listening to them."

Rosebrier was a pretty place. It stood far back from the quiet country road; all one could see of it, through the locusts and maples, was a fat, red chimney. It was separated from the road by a beautiful, thick hedge of brier-roses, intertwined with morning-glory vines.

In the stable, which looked like an ivy-covered mound, there were two ponies,—jolly, good-natured, slow ponies. Brownie was one, Rosalind the other. Brownie was Texan, who was so old now that he had almost forgotten his tricks of bucking and other pleasant peculiarities. But sometimes the blood of his youth boiled, and he suddenly went back to some of his old habits. There was also a surrey in the stable,—not a very new one, but the family at Rosebrier liked it well enough.

The family consisted of the five Watsons—Mr. and Mrs. Watson, Richard, Bernard and

Rose Watson. Rose was eight years old; Richard was sixteen, and Bernard twelve. The children had never been away from home; they looked on Rosebrier, with its two lawns, its tennis-court, and its orchard and garden, as the loveliest place on earth. There were no schools near; and Mr. Watson, who was an invalid, had undertaken to prepare Richard and Bernard for college, and they made fair progress.

One day their Uncle William Watson came to visit them at Rosebrier. He stood on the porch watching them. Bernard was lying at full length, with Froissart's "Chronicles" under his eyes; Richard was feeding Brownie with apples; and Rose was approaching the house with an apronful of flowers for the Blessed Virgin's alcove.

"How happy they are!" said Mrs. Watson, with a sigh. "I hope it will last."

"They are too softly protected from all the winds of life," Uncle William answered. "They ought to have some variety ——"

"Surely you would not change them, William!" interrupted Mrs. Watson. "They are gentle, kind. Rose is carefully picking out the

finest roses for the Blessed Virgin's altar,—how thoughtful! Surely you would not change them!"

"Oh, no!" said Uncle William. "But I'd give them some interest outside of themselves. Everything is made entirely too smooth for them. It seems a pity that all this country freshness and brightness should be monopolized by three children, while the city swarms with little ones who stifle all summer long in the heat."

Mrs. Watson thought for a moment.

"But why shouldn't they enjoy what their father worked so hard for? He lost his health and strength in trying to make his family comfortable. Why shouldn't the children enjoy the result of his work?"

"They're having too much enjoyment. They have no interests outside of themselves. They'll become selfish."

"I don't think they are selfish, Will."

"Well—I don't know about that. They've had no experience to make them unselfish. Why don't you invite some other young people to spend the summer here? Or, better still, let

me get you one or two city children who never get a breath of country air: poor children—orphans, if I can get them." Uncle Will was very insidious.

Mrs. Watson was silent. She looked at the velvet lawn, thought of the good order in which everything was, and shuddered at the prospect. What if the strange young persons had bad manners? Suppose they used their knives instead of their forks at dinner, and pointed at things they wanted, and tramped over the hall rugs with muddy shoes?

Mrs. Watson sighed. "I am afraid *I* am selfish," she assented, finally; "but I can't endure the thought of having rude, uncultivated children here. All my life has been given up to making our children what they should be. Did you ever notice what a soft, sweet voice Rose has? You can't imagine what pains I have taken with her. And to think of some loud-voiced girl coming in here, marking my curtains with greasy fingers, disarranging everything,—oh, dear, I can't think of such a thing!"

Rose, a sweet girl—a picture of golden hair, blue ribbon, white muslin, and dimples,—came

up at this moment, and put a large bunch of white and pink roses in a blue china bowl on the porch table. She smiled very pleasantly at her Uncle Will, and then took her mother's hand and nestled close to her mother's side, as a nice little girl ought to do.

"I am thinking of bringing two orphans to live with you for a time," said Uncle Will. "How will you like it?"

"Poor little things!" exclaimed Rose. "How I shall love them! Just think of having no father or mother! Oh, dear," and her blue eyes moistened, "I think I should die if I were an orphan!" (The mother and daughter clasped hands very tenderly.) "I'll let them have part of my doll's house and—here come the boys!"

Brownie had been taken back to his stable, and Richard and Bernard—the latter with the big Froissart under his arm—were coming up the porch steps.

"O Dick," Rose called out, "we're to have two little orphans to play with! Uncle Will is going to bring them. Isn't it lovely?"

Uncle Will smiled.

Richard raised his sleepy-looking eyes to his

uncle's face and waited. Bernard said, petulantly:

"What do we want orphans for? Strangers pottering around are a nuisance. They mix up all the books, and these orphans will probably tear them."

"I am afraid you *are* selfish," said his mother. "Just think of the children stifling in the city streets this hot weather, and compare their lot with yours. You can swing in the hammock over there, where there is always a breeze. You can jump on Brownie, and feel the breezes rush past you on the warmest day. But these unhappy children can find no relief.—Yes, Uncle Will, bring the orphans here; they will do us all good, and we'll do our best to civilize them if they are a little rough."

"Very well," Uncle William said. "I may as well be frank: I've asked them already, and one will be here to-night."

Mrs. Watson smiled. He had a way of doing as he pleased, and his intentions were always good; but she could not help wishing he had given her longer warning.

At dinner the sole subject of conversation was

the orphans. Rose almost wept as she imagined their pale cheeks, wistful looks, and utter sorrowfulness.

Uncle William explained that one was his old friend John Harney's little girl, whose mother had died some years ago; and that the other was their own cousin Alice Watson. He did not know Josie Harney very well; but he knew Alice —and he smiled a little,—and he hoped they would all like her, though she was much older.

"Like her!" exclaimed Rose. "It would be a sin not to love an orphan!"

The boys were less enthusiastic. They feared that some of their favorite amusements might be interfered with. Richard had some doubts about the attic where his chemicals were. Rose respected them, and would never dream of invading his sanctuary. Bernard trembled for his books; he could leave a precious volume on a window-seat or on the sitting-room table one day and find it there the next. The hammock on the lawn was his: nobody used it, because he liked to lounge in it and commit his lessons to memory. The boat on the lake was Richard's, and the other children always respected him as

its owner. The grapes in the little arbor were never touched by anybody until Rose gave the word, and that was not until she had picked the largest bunches for her father's feast-day.

Order and peace reigned at Rosebrier; the children had been taught that order meant comfort, and they had all become almost slaves to comfort. Nobody encroached on the leisure of anybody else. Mrs. Watson and Rose always took the back seat in the surrey; Richard rode on Brownie and Bernard drove. Mr. Watson never went out in a carriage; he walked only within the Rosebrier grounds.

Mr. Watson understood Uncle Will's intention about the orphans, and laughed silently as the children discussed it.

"I am afraid we are selfish here, Will," he said. "There are no better children in the world than mine, even if I do say it; but I think the very happiness we enjoy here is a bad preparation for actual life,—I mean, of course, for the children; for I suppose I shall never see much actual life outside of Rosebrier."

"We'll see how they stand the test. I think you'll thank me for my interference in this mat-

ter. I have an idea the orphans will do them more good than they'll do the orphans."

"I shall give them some of my old dresses, shall I not, mamma?" said Rose. "The blue lawn has just a small spot in it, and the pink is only a little torn. I should think an orphan would look *sweet* in that!"

Rose paused in the act of peeling a pear and admired her own generosity. Mrs. Watson cast an approving glance towards her; but Uncle Will asked if St. Elizabeth gave only her old clothes to the poor.

"I don't see why she should give new clothes away," said Bernard. "Old clothes are good enough for poor people."

"I don't think St. Martin gave away his cloak to the poor man because it was old," Uncle Will replied.

Bernard was silent. He said to himself that as Uncle Will intended to be a priest, of course he had ideas nobody else could understand. For himself he would never give away anything that he needed.

"Who was St. Martin?" asked Rose.

"The good French saint who gave his own

cloak to a shivering beggar, and shivered himself."

"How uncomfortable!" said Rose. "Why didn't he buy the beggar a new one and keep his own?"

"Because he was a saint, I suppose," answered Uncle Will. "But, for your understanding, perhaps there were no shops, and perhaps he did not have the money; and perhaps the beggar might have died of cold while St. Martin was looking for a cloak coarse enough to suit the beggar's station in life."

Richard looked keenly at his uncle. "I wish you wouldn't laugh at us, uncle! Even in America there are different stations in life; and what might suit a beggar would not be suitable to a gentleman ——"

Uncle Will sighed and interrupted. "I wish you would not always think of yourself as a gentleman, Dick,—that is, as somebody apart from the rest of the world. Let other people call you a gentleman. Be content with yourself as a Christian and a human being. I count on you to be good to the orphans."

"Are they nice, sir?" Richard asked.

"I really don't know; but they are Christians and human beings."

"I suppose they'll be dropping tears all over the place, and talking of death, and making life so gloomy that we'll be glad to be rid of them," Richard said, discontentedly. "Oh, dear, I wish they were gone!"

"I know the style," remarked his brother. "Like Smike in 'Nicholas Nickleby': they'll wear black gowns, and refuse to eat because their tears choke them."

"For shame!" said Mrs. Watson. "Do you know, I believe that these children are a trifle heartless."

"Too much comfort always makes people heartless," answered Uncle Will.

Coffee was served, with a very small cup for Rose, and the family went into the sitting-room to say the rosary. This was an invariable custom at Rosebrier. The children, associating it with the calm twilight in winter and the glowing sunset in summer, had learned to love it. Hardly had Mr. Watson finished when a carriage drove up to the front door. A voice, calling authoritatively and shrilly: "Don't smash my trunk!"

A minute afterwards a tall girl bounded into the room, with the exclamation: "How do you do, all! I'm Alice Watson."

One of the orphans had come.

II

ALICE WATSON

Mrs. Watson grew sad as she looked at the newcomer. Uncle Will was in the habit of ruling the household at Rosebrier—for its own good, of course Mr. Watson rather liked it, because, as he was never quite well, it relieved him of responsibility; and Mrs. Watson always held that whatever her brother-in-law did was right. Occasionally the boys had rebelled; but they were so plainly in the wrong at those times, and Uncle Will so plainly in the right, that their opposition only made his rule the stronger. Looking at Alice Watson as she advanced into the lamp-light, Mrs. Watson felt that she ought to have insisted on knowing more about the newcomer before permitting her to come into the house; and for the first time she felt somewhat indignant at Uncle Will's high-handed way of providing her with guests.

Alice had become a tall girl. She wore a big

straw hat, with a trailing feather, and a long plaid ulster, into the pockets of which her hands were thrust.

"Well, Uncle Will," she said, "I'm here!"

Uncle Will shook hands with her. "But I did not expect you until ten o'clock. You know I told you to take the——"

"Oh, I took the other road!" Alice interrupted coolly. "It tired me to wait."

She held her cheek towards Mrs. Watson to be kissed, and smiled condescendingly at Rose, who approached timidly.

Uncle Will introduced the rest of the family. Alice went through this ceremony with great self-possession. She made even her uncle and aunt feel that she was the oldest person present.

Divested of her hat and wrap, she appeared in an elaborately trimmed frock.

"Dear me," she said, "I am hardly presentable! I really ought to change my gown."

Rose blushed as she heard these majestic words. This was the person to whom she had thought of giving her cast-off dresses!

Mrs. Watson asked Rose to take Alice to her room, suggesting that it was too late to change

her dress. Alice, after some discussion, concluded to have a cup of tea as she was. Mrs. Watson sent for tea and cake; and Alice, taking the large armchair usually reserved for Mr. Watson, proceeded to refresh herself.

Richard watched her with interest. He had never before seen anybody like her. She glanced about the room with undisguised curiosity. The Watsons held this room was the prettiest in the world. Its big windows looked towards the west; its polished floor was covered with Turkish rugs; and the walls were stained so that the water-colors, tastefully bound books, brass shields and candlesticks, showed to the best advantage. Richard watched her looks with satisfaction; she must admire this room!

"How do you get on without gas, Mrs. Watson? Nobody in the city thinks of getting on without gas or electric light."

Rose looked in astonishment at this bold young person, who did not admire their beautiful silver lamp.

"How old-fashioned! And rugs too! You know they've gone out. Everybody has floors waxed so that you can see yourself in them, and

not a rug anywhere. But I suppose country people always are a little behind in the styles. Madame says that everything is Louis Seize now."

Richard's jaw fell. "Louis Seize!" What was "Louis Seize"?

Fancying from the silence around her that she was in deeper water than suited her acquaintances, she condescended to give a few words of explanation:

"Louis Seize means Louis the Sixteenth,—the king that beheaded Marie Antoinette, you know."

Richard forgot his manners and laughed. Alice's color rose; she looked at Mrs. Watson's pained face. Mrs. Watson had never known Richard to be so rude before.

"What is that boy laughing at?" Alice asked, setting down her teacup.

"I was laughing because it seems to me you know more about fashion than history," said the boy, disregarding his mother's shocked "Hush!"

"Louis the Sixteenth did cut off Marie Antoinette's head."

"Why, Marie Antoinette was his wife; and the mob beheaded both her and him!"

"Of course," said Alice graciously, "I knew that."

"Of course," answered Richard, sarcastically.

Mr. Watson interfered; he gravely asked Richard to leave the room. Richard was in disgrace, and he could scarcely believe it possible. Bernard and Rose were aghast. Richard ordered out of the room,—Richard, the pink of propriety! Whose turn would it be next? Bernard, moved by the awfulness of this event, could only murmur as his brother passed: "I'd like to club that orphan!"

Unhappily, his mother heard him; the pained look on her face made life a burden to him for the rest of the evening. The orphan had not been in the house half an hour, and her work had begun: their pleasant circle was already broken.

Mr. Watson went over to the lounge and took up a book. Alice sipped her tea and was silent until she saw the rosary.

"Oh, you're all Catholics here, I suppose?" she remarked suddenly.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Watson. "Is not that a pretty rosary?"

"Garnets and pearls,—yes, very pretty; but I don't bother about religion. Madame Régence says it's bad form to be too zealous. My sister does the devotion for the family. Of course I go to mass when it's clear."

Uncle Will dared not meet Mrs. Watson's eyes as Alice made this announcement. He felt that he had made a mistake, and he wished with all his heart that he had not taken advantage of the gentleness of the Watsons to force this cousin upon them.

The guest yawned, politely covering her mouth with her hand. Rose was wishing all the time that she would let papa have his armchair, for he was falling asleep on the lounge; and the rest of the family knew that if he slept now he would lie awake all night, and be ill in the morning. Rose drew a long folding-chair into the light, piled up the pine-scented cushions as high as possible, and asked Alice if she would not take it.

"Thank you; I'm quite comfortable," was the answer, with another yawn.

Mrs. Watson saw with horror that Mr. Watson

was closing his eyes. It was felt as a family calamity when Mr. Watson lost a night's sleep. If he could only be got into his chair!

"Have you ever seen the moon?" asked Bernard, nervously, in the hope that she would change her seat. "I mean, have you ever seen the moon through our bay-window?"

"Of course not," answered Alice; "but I fancy the moon looks the same through your bay-windows as through other bay-windows!"

Bernard was crushed. He looked angrily at the guest.

Rose felt that she must do something.

"Papa!" she said.

No answer, but a slight snore.

"Papa!"

Still no answer.

"Papa!!"

Mr. Watson jumped from his recumbent position, with a feeling that the house was a-fire, at least. His head struck a little ebony cabinet on the wall, and the cabinet and a cherished Dresden cup and saucer fell to the floor. The cup was uninjured, but the saucer flew into a dozen pieces.

Rose, with tears in her eyes, ran to pick up the fragments. "Oh, I didn't mean to do it! I really didn't mean to do it!" she said, beginning to cry.

Mr. Watson looked with amazed eyes at the scene. "Rose," he said, "I wish you were more considerate. Your screaming awakened me so suddenly that I have a splitting headache. You used to be more thoughtful!"

Rose, who had never been rebuked by her father before this, dropped the fragments of china, with the cup, which at once went to pieces, and ran sobbing out of the room.

Bernard sat glowering at the orphan, who seemed a little tired of the people around her, but entirely satisfied with herself.

"What do you do in the evenings? Don't you find them tiresome? In New York there is always something going on."

Rose stole in quietly, and went over to the lounge beside her father, who had gone to sleep again. Alice immediately addressed her talk to her.

"You should have seen the gown Georgina Stanhope wore at the reception the other night.

Oh, it was lovely! It had three panels of Cluny lace over heliotrope brocade; the side was caught up with stephanotis; there was something like a Watteau train, only it wasn't; and——"

"Rose does not understand such things, Miss Watson!" interposed Mrs. Watson, overwhelmed by the volubility of this young creature, who seemed to be twenty-four years of age. "Rose and I have no concern with those elaborate fashions."

"Dear me!" answered Alice, pityingly. "I must show you my tea-gown to-morrow. It's quite Japanese, I believe, in style. But of course, as I am an orphan, Uncle Will and other people have given me a great deal. I hope you'll not mind my saying that Rose's frock might have a little more style."

Rose blushed, and looked down at her pretty white dress, which she had admired very much.

Mrs. Watson was seriously uneasy. She could understand that Alice Watson should have become vain, under worldly influences, away from home, and frivolous; and she could feel sorry for her. But she was seriously alarmed for the effect that such frivolity might produce

in the quiet household at Rosebrier. She knew that her own children were not so unselfish as they might be. They were too much wrapped up in one another; they had little care for those who lived outside their own comfortable domain. She hoped that this selfishness might be corrected, yet Uncle Will's remedy seemed to her worse than the disease. Suppose Rose should grow to be fond of dress; suppose Richard should get into the habit of keeping away from the family group at night; suppose Bernard should continue to develop the ill feelings that showed plainly in his eyes? In the course of one short hour their cousin had managed to bring confusion into the pleasantest household in the country. Oh, why had Uncle Will been so officious? Why had he not talked the matter over? What evil might not be done in two weeks?

Uncle Will pretended to be buried in a book. He wondered how he could remedy the mischief he had done. He began to understand that Alice would bring out all the worst qualities in the young Watsons, instead of developing their good ones. He did not know exactly when

Josie Harney would come. How he regretted his impulsiveness; he realized that a family circle is a very sacred thing; and that an outsider, no matter how privileged, must be careful as to whom he introduces into it.

After an uncomfortable silence, Mr. Watson sent for candles and the party broke up. Alice condescended to be pleased with her room, which had been carefully decorated by Rose for the use of her guests; and quiet fell—but not sleep. Mr. Watson groaned all night, Mrs. Watson thought anxiously, and Uncle Will wondered what he should do with the other orphan.

III

À LA MODE

THE next morning everybody came down to breakfast, without the usual feeling of pleasure, —that is, everybody except Alice, who requested that her coffee might be sent up to her. Mrs. Watson consented to this, as Alice had the excuse of her journey the night before ; but she resolved that it should not be a regular thing.

Mr. Watson looked pale and worn, and Uncle Will rather downcast. After breakfast the latter went into the study and busied himself with his books of Latin philosophy. Generally he took a long walk with the young folks. Richard and Bernard went out on the porch to compare notes until lesson time. Rose walked towards the stable to give the ponies their lumps of sugar-gifts she bestowed every morning.

After a time Alice came down, attired in a gorgeous morning robe, and proposed golf or lawn tennis. Such a thing had never been heard of at that hour in the morning; the Watsons al-

ways worked or studied until noon; and Richard and Bernard were astonished at such a new idea. But it would not do to refuse the first request made by a visitor. There were no lessons that morning. The rackets moved rapidly on either side of the net until the luncheon bell rang.

Mr. Watson insisted that the lessons should be recited in the afternoon. The boys were dissatisfied. *They* had never worked after luncheon before. Richard wanted to find out in his attic whether there was an acid that would separate gold from the rock in which it was embedded. Bernard had made an engagement with Rose to search for colored leaves. But Mr. Watson was firm: the lessons must go on. Never had the two students been so listless and tired. Every now and then Alice came to the window and asked frivolous questions, until she found an old side-saddle and went off for a canter on Rosalind.

When she came back the poor pony was white with sweat; and Tom, who took care of him, and who had been with the Watsons for many years, was very indignant. Alice did not care. She wanted to try Brownie, but Tom would not allow it.

After that she devoted herself to Rose. She held the little girl spellbound with her description of the gay events that made city life so delightful. She found fault with Rose's stout walking-shoes and made fun of her simple frocks until the little girl almost cried with vexation.

"I should think you'd want to go to the city sometimes; it is so humdrum here,—I don't see how you live!"

"This is our home," answered Rose, in amazement. "Why should I not love it?"

"But it is such a small place. If you were rich it would be endurable. If you had an automobile instead of that old surrey, and there was some society, one might stand it."

Rose opened her eyes.

"I *love* Rosebrier, and are not Dick and Bernard and papa and mamma ——"

"Yes; but there's no fun with one's own relations; but I am sure I couldn't live in a quiet place like this any way."

For the first time Rose began to have doubts. Was not Rosebrier the sweetest place on earth? The lawn was green, with a russet pine cone here and there; the geraniums were blazing scarlet,

and the dahlias and chrysanthemums were dazzling in their colors. The house was small —but it was *home.* She sighed; perhaps everything was not as nice as she thought it was.

When the lessons were over, Mrs. Watson called the young folk to the porch and showed a box of candy she had just received. It was a thing of beauty inside; among artistically arranged chocolate bonbons and Portuguese almonds was a luscious circle of candied pineapple. Every one at Rosebrier liked candied pineapple, so Mr. Watson took out his little silver knife to divide it. It occurred to him, however, that it would be the proper thing to offer the box first to the guest. That young lady coolly took the pineapple and then spent some time in choosing her special favorites.

"I did not mind losing the pineapple," said Bernard afterwards; "but it looked so selfish."

"I was ashamed to see her do it," Richard answered; "but it ought to be a lesson to us. I began to understand why people insist so much on little things in manners. If people outside in the world are like that, I want to stay at home. I can't realize that she is really our cousin."

What Bernard had said was true. It was not the loss of the pineapple, but the selfishness of the act that had shocked him. After that Alice could have no more influence over the boys. They had been so well brought up that her descriptions of great palaces and gay assemblies did not move them; for, as Bernard expressed it, he did "not want to live among fashionable people who grabbed all the pineapple."

Rose was more impressionable. She followed Alice to her room, and was helped by that young lady to dress for the evening. Alice heated an iron over a little taper she had brought with her, and adorned Rose's forehead with a curled pompadour, which Alice declared to be "good form." She "improved" poor Rose's frock in various ways, and then remarked that she was too pale. Having rubbed geranium petals over Rose's cheeks until they blazed, she softened the effect with pearl-powder; then she laughed, imagining the effect on the simple people below.

"Really, you'd almost do at Madame Régence's! Your own people will not know you." Then she turned away, and laughed again.

And indeed Rose looked very much like an overgrown and badly painted doll.

"You will see what an effect you will make when you go down-stairs. If the boys laugh, don't mind; they'll have to get used to city ways."

Alice thus instructed Rose while she powdered her own face. She put on a heavily trimmed frock, hung a large silver *bonbonnière* at her waist, and sat down before the mirror to wait for the dinner-bell to ring.

Rose was uncertain about her appearance, and afraid to go down. Would the rest of the family be pleased with her dress? She was not quite certain of it, in spite of Alice's assurance.

"When you enter a room you must smile this way," said Alice, distending her mouth into a very artificial grin. "Madame always does it."

Rose dutifully tried to imitate her. Alice covered her mouth with her hand.

They went down into the hall, Rose growing more and more doubtful, and keeping behind her leader. They stood in the hall and looked into the dining-room. It was lit by the great silver lamp, that stood in a heap of white asters, to

which the red shade gave a tender glow. Mrs. Watson, with soft white lace about her throat, sat with the soup tureen in front of her. The girls were a little late. Scarcely knowing whether she was flying or walking, Rose followed Alice into the room.

Silence,—a silence of amazement! What creatures were these? Uncle Will opened his mouth in utter astonishment. Mrs. Watson rose from the table. The boys laughed loudly—and then said they could not help it. In a moment Rose felt a hand on her arm; she was dragged out into the hall; Alice accompanied her in the same way; and Mrs. Watson slapped not only Rose but Alice.

"How dare you strike *me?*" demanded that young lady, much subdued. A succession of quick slaps followed, and Alice and Rose found themselves in their rooms, with the keys turned outside, and Rose's tears washing away the geranium stain and the pearl-powder. Alice laughed outright;—her aunt's slap had been so sudden.

The rest of the Watsons had a very dreary dinner, although Richard and Bernard could not repress an occasional giggle, as they thought of

the appearance of the two fashionable young ladies. Mr. Watson said nothing until the boys had excused themselves and gone out upon the porch.

"Will," he began, "I must confess your orphan is not quite what we expected. She seems not to need our protection. I thought you said she was poor and in need of charity?"

"To tell the truth, I didn't know much about her, and I am heartily sorry I brought her here. All I knew about her was that she was my brother's child,—too much neglected by me. I thought she would give the children a new interest in life."

Mrs. Watson sighed.

"I suppose she will stay?" asked Mr. Watson, doubtfully.

"She will have to," answered Uncle Will. "Madame Régence does not expect her back, and I don't think you'd care to turn her out."

"Of course not," Mrs. Watson said; "but I wish I knew what to do with her. A poor relation one has to consider,—but one who is not poor is in a different position. She will be rich

by and by, if you look after her as generously as you intend to look after our children."

Uncle Will groaned to himself. And he devoutly hoped that Josie Harney might do something to neutralize the effect of Alice Watson's peculiar ways.

Mr. Watson was very tired. He feared that one of his attacks was coming on again. These attacks were violent pains in the side, which afflicted him whenever he spent a sleepless night or whenever he experienced any excitement. He lay down on the lounge, feeling unusually depressed. There was no pleasant evening in prospect. Richard and Bernard had gone out, Rose was in disgrace, and Mrs. Watson had just left the room to go to Alice Watson.

Alice was sitting on a stool in the middle of the floor, when Mrs. Watson turned the key of the door and entered. She arose and her eyes flashed. She forgot all her amusement at once.

"I should think you would be ashamed!" she exclaimed, rising from her seat.

"I feel I was justified in doing what your mother would have done under the circumstances. You act like a foolish child, Alice; and when you

do wrong, under my roof, you shall be punished as any other foolish girl should be punished."

"Do you know how old I am?" asked Alice. Then, something kind and motherly in her aunt's face made her cry. These tears decided Mrs. Watson. After all, Alice was only a spoiled girl.

In spite of her trouble, Mrs. Watson could hardly help smiling at the object before her. Tears and pearl-powder and geranium stain made her face resemble a painter's palette, on which the colors had become mixed. Her pompadour had been pushed back; it stood on end like the bristles of a brush, and helped to make her look very funny. Mrs. Watson went up to Alice and put her arm around her.

"Come, my dear," she said, "let us talk the whole matter over. I want Rose to grow up a gentle, sweet woman, not a lady of fashion; and here you come and try to teach her to be affected and not nice at all."

Alice tried to push Mrs. Watson's arm away, but at last submitted. "I was half in fun," she said. "You take everything too seriously."

"I should like to see you simple and kind. And, if you let me, I shall recall some of the

things your mother taught you,—things you do not learn at Madame Régence's, I am afraid."

Alice listened. Nobody ever talked in this way to her now. She felt a deep longing to have her mother. Her anger against Mrs. Watson suddenly disappeared. And that good woman, surprised by the earnest look that had come into her eyes, bent down and kissed her. Madame Régence's lessons had not sunk very deep.

"I will try to do what you want me to—but I don't know what it is yet," she said.

At this moment rapid steps were heard on the stairs, and calls for Mrs. Watson, who hurried down at once, followed by Alice. Mrs. Watson knew what was the matter. Her husband lay on the lounge, groaning as if a dagger were entering his side; the pains he suffered were even sharper than dagger thrusts.

Tom was sent for at once; he must saddle Rosalind immediately, and ride three miles for the doctor. Tom was willing enough, though a great black cloud hung over the west and vivid flashes of lightning lit up the landscape. Rosalind must be taken, because Brownie was not a safe horse to ride in a storm. Quiet enough in

daylight, he swerved and stumbled at night, and seemed to lose his instinct.

Tom returned from the stable, indignation written on his face.

"Rosalind isn't fit to move, ma'am; she's lame." He glanced at Alice indignantly.

Alice did not notice this. It was her fault; she knew it.

Mr. Watson's groans were louder; poultices were applied to him without effect.

"We *must* have a doctor," Richard said. "I'll take Brownie and risk it."

His mother hesitated. Could she trust the boy with Brownie? She could not say No; she trusted that God would keep the boy safe, since he was going forth to save his father's life.

Richard came back to the house in a few moments, dripping with rain; for the storm had broken at last. Brownie was gone,—the stable door was open; and Alice, too, had disappeared.

Mr. Watson's groans became faint moans of anguish.

"He will die before the doctor comes!" said Richard, in anguish.

His mother sank on her knees.

IV

ANOTHER ARRIVAL

FEAR for Mr. Watson's life was mingled with anxiety about Alice. Brownie was gone; Alice was gone. Even if Uncle Will or one of the boys should venture out in the storm, the doctor could not reach Rosebrier in time to relieve Mr. Watson. Mrs. Watson, usually so ready in emergencies, could do nothing. Another trouble had come upon her. Suppose Alice should meet her death in the storm?

"I believe that in a fit of anger she has run away with Brownie," Richard said. "She is a detestable creature!"

"I am afraid you are right," Uncle Will replied.

But Rose would not hear of it. She defended Alice with all her might.

"I'm sure she means well. I know that she has gone for the doctor—I know she has!"

"I fancy Rose is right," Mrs. Watson said.

"She was not angry. I fear that this foolish act may end in her death."

The Watsons were silent. They knew well that Brownie always became utterly unmanageable in a storm. It was more than Richard could do to hold him at such a time. Mr. Watson's groans diverted them for a moment from this new cause of fear. Uncle Will could only walk up and down the floor, in a very unenviable frame of mind. What if Alice should be killed? What if she should attempt, wet to the skin, thinly clad, to go back to the city? He went to the window and looked out into the deep darkness, broken now and then by blinding flashes of lightning. The boys plainly expressed their indignation against Alice. Mrs. Watson hushed them.

"The poor child probably realized that she had caused us some trouble and tried to remedy it. Do not blame her. I am sure she meant well."

"Meant well!" exclaimed Richard, curling his lip. "She might have known that she could only add to our difficulties. She has simply cut off all chance of our helping papa to bear this awful pain. Her selfishness was bad enough without this."

"Be charitable," said Mrs. Watson, softly. "The poor girl acts from impulse, not principle. Be charitable. It will not help your poor father's pain to blame her."

Time passed. Never had the people at Rosebrier known such moments of suffering. Rose and Uncle Will said the rosary at Mr. Watson's side. The sound of their praying seemed to quiet him.

In one of the lulls of the storm there was a sound of galloping hoofs on the sandy road. Then there followed a noise as of one jumping on the porch, hurried steps across the hall, and Alice Watson, wet and bedraggled, with splashes of mud on her face, threw open the door.

"The doctor will be here in a moment," she said; and while she spoke the water dripped from her and made a pool on the carpet. The astonished group looked at her in silence. Then Mrs. Watson went up to her and kissed her on the forehead saying, "Come with me; you must change your clothes."

Alice was about to obey her, when she caught sight of what seemed to be a look of defiance on Richard's face.

"No," she said, drawing back from Mrs. Watson. "I'll go away just as I am. Those boys don't like me—I can see that. I know I've been the cause of a great deal of trouble, but I won't be looked at that way—*I won't!* Now there!"

"Come!" Mrs. Watson said, with more authority.

Alice stood for a moment in the doorway and flung a parting dart at Richard.

"If *I* couldn't ride Brownie in a little rain I'd be ashamed of myself!"

Having thus relieved her mind, she permitted Mrs. Watson to look after her toilet.

The doctor came, in spite of the rain and lightning. He was a special friend of Mr. Watson's, and he concluded, from Alice's abrupt and startling appearance, that his patient must be dying. He knew exactly what to do, and in half an hour Mr. Watson was quietly sleeping. His duty done, the doctor went into the study to smoke a cigar with Uncle Will.

"What a strange girl that is!" he said. "She knocked at the door with a stick of wood, and kept on battering away until I appeared. Who

is she? And how did she come to be sent, while the boys were at home?"

"She wasn't sent," answered Uncle Will. "She went herself, without asking permission. She is a daughter of a brother of mine and an orphan. When I came from China I went to see her. Of late she has been in the hands of a rich relative, who has spoiled her. I should not have asked her to come here; but to tell the truth, I did not give the matter much thought."

"She must have a good heart, or she would never have risked her life on that obstinate little beast Brownie."

"She's impulsive."

"But her impulses must be good."

"Sometimes; but you know, doctor, that good impulses indulged without regard to obedience or the fitness of the occasion do more harm than good. She has not learned to obey. Suppose, now, I had followed my first impulse and given my brother the anodyne you prescribed in such delicate quantities? I might have killed him."

"You probably would have done so," assented the doctor. "Of course, a good-hearted person

who disregards rules may often do a great deal of harm."

"This Alice has given us so much anxiety. I wish she were safe out of the house."

"That sounds unkind," remarked the doctor with a smile.

"And there is another orphan coming, too," said Uncle Will, with a sigh.

The doctor laughed. "I fancy Mrs. Watson will find a way to touch your present orphan's good heart. The rain has stopped—I must go."

And the doctor left Uncle Will to his thoughts.

In the meantime Mrs. Watson had a stormy scene with Alice. But it was a scene that gave her hope for the girl.

"I like you," Alice exclaimed, as Mrs. Watson combed out her tangled hair,—"I like you, but I *hate* that boy of yours. I could kill him! He had no business to look at me that way. I did a brave thing to go out in the storm, and he ought to be grateful to me."

"Alice, you make me forget that you are almost a young lady. You frightened us all so," Mrs. Watson said. "We were afraid you'd be killed."

"But I wasn't. I kept Brownie's head well up; and when he seemed frightened I let the reins go loose, and we dashed along like the wind. That boy of yours couldn't have done it as well. I know it was my fault, but Richard had no right to look at me that way."

"Never mind—forget all about it. You meant well. Another time you must not be so impulsive."

Alice's eyes flashed. "'Meant' well!" she said. "Why don't you call me good-hearted at once?—and that of course means that I am a fool. Oh, don't mind me!" she continued, seeing that Mrs. Watson was shocked. "Don't go, please; I'll be good. I liked you the moment I saw you; but my own mother was never so imperious."

"You ought to try to do what I tell you, then."

"Well, what do you want me to do?"

"Say your prayers and go to bed."

"I can't say my prayers, because I don't like Richard; but I'll go to bed."

Mrs. Watson said nothing. She said to herself that this outbreak was better than the fashionable

affectations Alice had at first indulged. An impulsive girl may be trained; an artificial girl is generally too shallow to be permanently influenced for good.

The next day rose brilliantly. Mr. Watson slept until noon, and arose much better in health. The young folk made the luncheon-table bright with leaves and late flowers in his honor. Alice was quite subdued. She took no notice of Richard—except to tell him across the table that if she had hurt his pony she would give him a better one. Richard had grown very red at this.

"No money could buy a better pony than Rosalind," he growled. "I would rather have her, lame even, than any horse that money could buy. Money can't do *everything*."

Alice looked at Richard—but the entrance of Mr. Watson doubtless prevented a storm of words.

In the afternoon the young people drove to church; it was Friday, their day for going to confession. Alice was at first inclined to be critical about the plainness of the little church. But when she entered its soft stillness, rich with the perfume of flowers, she knelt like the rest.

The light before the tabernacle burned like a big ruby; the silence was so intense that Alice was affected in spite of herself. She watched the movements of her enemy with interest mingled with contempt. He knelt very devoutly and prepared himself for confession.

"Much good his religion does him," she thought; "for I know he hates me. But, then," she added, following her usual habits of self-pity or self-gratulation, "everybody hates a superior."

Rose said her rosary fervently. The only sounds heard in the chapel were the low murmur of the priest's voice in the green-curtained box and the wind rustling through the dry leaves outside.

Richard rose from his knees, walked back to the pew in which Alice sat, hesitated an instant, and whispered softly: "I hope you will forgive me. I was wrong to be so—unpleasant."

Alice was too much surprised to answer him. He did not wait: he turned the knob of the green-curtained box and entered it.

Alice was indignant at first. She liked to be able to quarrel with her enemies, to keep up constant warfare with them. And she felt as if one

for whom she would have liked to make life disagreeable had escaped her. On reflection, she asked herself what had made him speak to her. She said that she would have permitted wild horses to tear her to pieces before acknowledging that she was in the wrong.

Rose and Bernard followed each other into the little box, and came out evidently very much relieved. There was less pride in Richard's face, and the other two seemed as if an inner light were shining through them.

What did it mean? Alice felt oppressed. God seemed very near, but she was afraid of Him. She wished she knew what made the young Watsons look so serene—even that haughty Richard.

It was time to go homeward. Rose left a pretty little basket, filled with home-made delicacies, at the door of the priest's house; and they started off, drawn by Brownie, who seemed none the worse for his ride of the night before.

The young people were very gay on the way home. Alice wondered greatly. Religion seemed to make them more cheerful. The dignified

Richard stopped to look for chestnuts, and actually found a large handful for Alice.

The dinner bell was ringing when they reached Rosebrier. On the porch stood a small, girlish figure, with her back to the road.

"The new orphan has come!" Rose exclaimed.

V

UNEXPECTED SCENES

JOSIE HARNEY was small for her age, with a fair number of freckles on her face, pleasant hazel eyes, and a shy look. She wore a neat black frock; and, as she happened to be bareheaded, the young people saw that she had a great deal of soft brown hair, parted in the middle.

Alice jumped out of the carriage first, and then turned to Rose and whispered: "There's no style about her!"

Josie, who was filling a vase with geraniums and mignonette, turned and faced the young people. Rose ran forward and kissed her.

"I know who you are. I am so glad to see you! We expected you."

Josie colored and looked pleased.

"This is Alice ——"

"*Miss*, if you please!" corrected Alice.

Richard, forgetting his resolutions, darted a contemptuous glance at her, and then evidently felt conscience-stricken.

"These are my brothers, Richard and Bernard," continued Rose.

"I hear you are an orphan," Alice remarked, patronizingly. "I suppose you find it unpleasant to live with other people."

Josie's eyes filled. "I lost my mother ——"

"Oh, only a half orphan!" interrupted Alice with a giggle. "That's nothing. I understood you were an orphan *really*."

Josie did not answer. Bernard saw a tear drop on the flowers in her hand.

"I'm sorry," Alice added. "But we must all bear our burdens ——"

"Don't you see Josie is crying, you heartless creature!" exclaimed Richard. "If you don't care for your parents, *she* does. Come, let us get ready for dinner. The bell has rung."

But Alice was not to be snubbed. "I don't choose to take talk like that from a boy that was afraid to ride Brownie in the rain, when his father needed the doctor. I'm not a coward."

"Hush! hush!" cried Josie, involuntarily.

"*You* keep quiet!" retorted Alice.

Richard's face was pale from anger. He felt the taunt about Brownie. But so fixed had be-

come the routine at Rosebrier that, the reputation of Brownie for balking at night having been settled, nobody would have dreamed of trying to ride the pony. Richard was stung. Why had he thought of himself for a moment? Why had he permitted this girl to do what he ought to have done? He was angry with himself. It would have made no difference what she said if there were no truth in her words. He turned—they were still standing on the porch—to reply to Alice; he was hot with anger. Rose murmured a prayer and put her hand softly on Richard's shoulder. "*Remember!*" she said.

Richard clenched his hands, and, without another word, rushed into the hall and up-stairs.

"He was afraid to answer me back!" said Alice.

"He was not afraid of you," said Josie, forgetting her shyness. "He was afraid of not being a Christian gentleman."

Josie said this in a very gentle voice. Alice laughed. Rose gave Josie a grateful glance. Bernard excused himself and drove the horse around to the stable. The girls lingered for a moment until Josie had arranged her flowers.

Then they walked up to freshen themselves for dinner.

Josie explained to Rose that she had arrived an hour before, and that she had been asked by Mrs. Watson to arrange some flowers for the table.

"I hope you will like me," she said.

"I am sure we shall," responded Rose, warmly.

Richard disappeared after dinner, and Rose seemed worried. On evenings like this it was Mr. Watson's habit to read some pages from "Father Faber." He asked for Richard. Bernard reported that Dick had gone to bed—at least his door was locked.

Alice was, in spite of herself, interested. She listened in wonder, and asked half a dozen questions. Josie who had settled down as one of the household, occupied herself in knitting a little purse.

After the reading was done, Mrs. Watson asked Josie some questions about herself.

"I live with the Sisters," Josie said. "Sister Evarista put me in charge of the conductor—his little girl is at the school too,—and I came straight here. And then ——"

"I met her at the station by chance," said

Uncle Will; "for Sister Evarista's telegram did not come until ten minutes ago."

"So you go to a convent school?" observed Alice. "Do you get out much?"

"We walk in the grounds sometimes."

"*Sometimes!*" exclaimed Alice. "And don't you ever go into the street or the opera?"

"Of course not," said Josie, amazed.

"I don't see how you can stay at such a school. I couldn't!"

"You are older," Josie said, quietly. Alice rattled on about the advantages of Madame Régence's, each sentence she uttered making her hearers more and more uncomfortable. But she fancied she was impressing them.

"Are you permitted to wear earrings at your school?" she asked, after a time.

"The Sisters say that we should be as simple as possible in our dress; and they don't approve of earrings at all."

"Dear me! Victoria Harding wears the most sumptuous pair of earrings I ever saw: white diamonds with pendants; and she has a ruby and ——"

Bernard groaned audibly.

"Thanks awfully!" Alice said, with a drawl intended to be sarcastic.

Bernard, Rose, and even Josie laughed.

"You are certainly polite," Alice said, with rising color; "but I don't care. It is plain you never met anybody but rural savages before, or you would not laugh. I wish I had never come here." She rose. "I will go away to-morrow."

Bernard looked sullen. "I am sure we do not care if you do," he retorted. "You've been as unpleasant as you could be ever since you came."

Alice looked at him, with her eyes flashing. She glanced at Rose's shocked face, darted towards Josie, and then, changing her mind, slapped Bernard on the cheek.

Bernard started up, and sat down again; his face was pale, except where the marks of Alice's fingers showed red.

There was a silence of horror. Who would have imagined that such a scene as this could occur at Rosebrier?

Alice stood erect, a frown contracting her forehead,—the picture of rage. Could this be

the old Alice of Capitol Hill? Nobody knew what to do. Josie, after looking about timidly, went towards Alice and put her arms around her.

"Come, let us go," she said, in her soft voice, which owed its soothing inflections to the training of the Sisters. "To-morrow you will understand. I am sure you did not mean it."

Alice pushed her away. "I did mean it, and I'd do it again!" At this moment she caught sight of the look in Mrs. Watson's eyes, and seized Josie's hand. "I'll go with you, and we'll just tell everybody they've turned two orphans out of doors."

Josie drew her towards the door. She began to sob; after a while she was heard crying at the top of her voice in her room.

An hour passed. Mrs. Watson went up stairs to talk to the boys. Later she came down to the study, where her husband and Uncle Will were seated.

"Neither Richard nor Bernard is tranquil," Mrs. Watson said; "and they are not as they usually are when they are prepared to approach the altar."

Mrs. Watson spoke almost with bitterness. It

seemed as if all kinds of shadows had been brought into her cheerful home by Alice Watson.

"That girl is not nearly so much to blame as the boys," Uncle Will replied. "I fancy that Alice has shown them that they are only 'fair weather Christians.' Everything has hitherto been made so smooth for them that even temptation has not come to them. I hope you will forgive me, Helen, when I have said that such a training will leave your boys like porcelain vases floating in a turbulent stream with earthen ones. The earthen ones, like Alice Watson, will knock them to pieces. I wish that we could send Richard away for a time."

A red spot shone on Mrs. Watson's cheek. She restrained herself; she saw that her husband was tired. But he aroused himself to ask:

"Would you have us fill our house with disagreeable people in order to make our children fit for the world? Are we to throw temptation in their way?"

"Not at all," answered Uncle Will; "but, you know, they should be so trained that they will not be damaged at the first collision with an unpleasant person."

Tears came into Mrs. Watson's eyes. It was very well to talk: that did not compensate for the peaceful happiness she had enjoyed in her little circle. After all, no doubt God would bring some good out of what seemed to be evil.

She went into the passage, to give an order to the servant about an early breakfast. It was dim after the lamp and firelight of the study. Suddenly she felt two arms around her neck.

"I wanted to see you," said a voice, "and so I waited here; and I heard what you said. I am sorry, very sorry!"

Mrs. Watson recognized Alice's voice.

"O Mrs. Watson," Alice went on, her voice trembling in an appeal because Mrs. Watson remained silent,—"O Mrs. Watson, Josie told me that I ought to go to confession to get rid of the bad feelings I have; she seemed to think that I was as good as I was before I went to Madame Régence's. O Mrs. Watson, I *do* want to be good! When I pretend that I like Madame Régence's better than this house, it is only because I want the boys to think that I am as well off as they are. That Richard is so proud I could kill him when he looks at me—yes, I could. But

I want to be better. I try to pray, but God is so far away. If I knew where He was, if I could get near to Him, I'm sure I should be good nearly all the time. If you don't teach me," she exclaimed impetuously, "I'll always be bad, and end by killing somebody!"

Mrs. Watson's heart was touched. "You shall go, Alice, nearer to God to-morrow—into His very presence. So Josie told you to go to confession? She's a good little girl. Now, go to bed, child."

Alice crept away, with her handkerchief to her eyes. Once in her room, she shook her fist at Richard's photograph, which hung near the bureau.

"Well," she said, "he is a prig; I'll tear his picture. I had better not," she concluded; "*she* will not like it."

Alice went to bed all the happier for having conquered herself. She recalled her old struggles in Washington. Then it had been easier,—her mother was alive.

VI

IN THE CHRYSANTHEMUM CIRCLE

BRIGHT and early next morning Alice was ready to go to mass with the rest. The boys, when they entered the church, made again for the confessional, where, fortunately, the priest waited. Mrs. Watson's heart glowed within her as Richard and Bernard—in fact, all her little flock except Alice—followed her to the altar rails. Alice had a feeling of being "left out." She knelt during the mass with a heavy heart, her eyes fixed on the prayer-book Rose had lent her.

The chapel was a poor one. A parlor organ, upon which Rose hoped one day to play, stood under the little gallery in the rear. The pictures were highly colored and cheap; but the altar and the tabernacle were as beautiful as possible. All Mrs. Watson's finest lace was there, and all the best blooms from her garden. Like Father Faber, the priest of the little chapel and his con-

gregation believed that their best should be turned towards God; and so, while the rest of the chapel showed poverty, the sanctuary was as splendid as possible.

The drive home in the fresh morning air was very pleasant. Breakfast was ready earlier than usual, and there were several dainties added in honor of the joyful day.

Josie Harney seemed to fit into the household. She was one of those slim, quiet little girls who seem to take up no room and are always in the right place. Her training at the convent had made her industrious and gentle. She was naturally bad-tempered. She was not tempted to cry out and to hate other people, as Alice was; but she could sulk and make life unhappy to those around her. Josie knew her failing; frequent examination of conscience had taught her what it was, and she tried hard to overcome it. Josie, although she had admirable qualities, was not perfection by any means; and the good Sisters knew this well. At present, however, everybody thought she was "just lovely," as Rose put it.

After breakfast Mr. Watson felt well enough

for a walk. The young folk went with him for ten turns in the chrysanthemum circle. It was a large circle, bordered with double rows of white and red chrysanthemums. Mr. Watson had had a good night's rest, and he was anxious to make the young people happy. Uncle Will had started to assist at Solemn High Mass at Sea Girt; Mrs. Watson was engaged in the house, and Mr. Watson felt a pleasure in arranging something for himself. Rose had one arm, Alice the other; Richard carried his cane, and Josie was standing on tiptoe trying to fasten a sprig of mignonette in his buttonhole. Bernard stood near, with his father's large plaid on his arm, ready to throw it over his father's shoulders in case of necessity.

"I want to give mamma a surprise. Thursday week is her birthday. What shall we do?"

"Do you mean what shall we give her, papa?" asked Rose.

"Oh, no! What will we do to please her?"

"We'd better send to the city to buy something nice for her!" exclaimed Alice, all enthusiasm. "I'll ask my guardian to give me enough money to get her a set of diamonds."

Josie's face flushed. She had no money, ex-

cept a few dollars. Rose saw this, and understood.

"Mamma would not like that at all," she said. "She does not like bought gifts; she wants something *made* just for her."

"Oh," said Alice disappointed, "I can't make anything worth having! It's easier to buy things."

Josie brightened. "I will help you to make something. I have lots of patterns for pincushions and work-bags,—lots!"

"But I am not talking of gifts," said Mr. Watson. "Mamma has more gifts than she knows what to do with. I thought we might get up an exhibition, an entertainment of some kind. There are so many of you that we might have a little play."

Alice said, "I will be Lady Macbeth, and order a costume from New York."

"I'll be Julius Cæsar," said Bernard, firmly. "I always wanted to be Julius Cæsar."

"I want to be a queen, with a long train," cried Rose.

"But I can't act at all," said Richard.

"Oh, it's easy!" answered Josie. "I acted a

blind girl at school last commencement. All you have to do is not to be frightened and to speak out loud."

Richard shook his head dubiously.

"Come, let us walk faster," said Mr. Watson, laughing. "I'm afraid I can't satisfy you. If we have a play, it must be a very little play. We can't attempt anything of Shakespeare's. We must not climb too high at once."

"Let me play a blind girl," said Josie, closing her eyes and groping about. "Sister Evarista said I did it *so* well."

Everybody laughed as Josie stumbled into a clump of chrysanthemums and almost fell; she had to open her eyes in order to save herself.

"But will you and mamma and Uncle Will be all our audience?" asked Bernard.

"I intend," whispered Mr. Watson, mysteriously, "to ask some of the people in the neighborhood," he said.

Richard made a face. "There are no nice people in the neighborhood," he said.

Mr. Watson looked grave. "What do you mean by 'nice' people? Do you mean that the people around us are poor, and therefore are

not worthy to associate with us? I am not rich; we all have to economize very much."

"I don't mean that. I mean that they are not like us, you know. Take Tom Comerford, for instance. He's always going about in his shirt-sleeves, and he chews tobacco. You surely would not ask him to come to the house?"

"Why not? When your mother was ill he brought over a basket of his best grapes, although it was a bad year and his magnificent bunches were worth at least fifty cents apiece in the market. Wasn't that kind? Now, why shouldn't he be asked to take part in the celebration of your mother's birthday?"

"He was so kind!" said Rose. "He came every day to ask after mamma."

"But I'm sure mother had kept his little sister alive by her kindness during the winter, and Tom was only paying her back."

"Gratitude is a fine thing and a rare thing," said Mr. Watson gravely. "And when we find it let us honor it. Tom shall certainly come to your mother's birthday party, if we have one. We must do our best to give others pleasure. Pleasure which is selfish is like seaweed seen in

the water. For a time it is beautiful; grasp it and put it in a vase, and it is worthless, shrivelled, no longer fair to the sight."

Richard said no more; he heard, but he was not convinced. He looked down on the people of the neighborhood, and he hoped that Uncle Will would persuade his father not to let such intruders as Tom Comerford into the sacred precincts of Rosebrier.

When Uncle Will came back in the evening he was informed of the plot in the most mysterious manner. Mr. Watson was in high spirits, and his wife pretended not to notice the whispering that went on around her. She had become used to such proceedings at certain times in the year. Uncle Will, much to Richard's disgust, thought that the neighbors ought to be invited. During a long illness Mrs. Watson had endured in the spring they had all been very kind.

Richard protested in vain, in a whisper. "If there were some pleasant people about here, I shouldn't mind inviting them," he said impatiently. "As it is, they are an *awful* set."

"They showed that they had kind hearts," put in Bernard; "and your favorite Tennyson says,

"'True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.'"

"That's only poetry," said Richard, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"The Bible is poetry,—at least a great part of it is," answered Bernard.

Bernard was suspected by the family of writing verses, and he was always touchy when his favorite art was attacked.

On Monday, in every interval of employment, the coming entertainment was discussed in the chrysanthemum circle, which was hidden from the house by an outer border of elm-trees. Mr. Watson and Rose were appointed as a committee on invitations, and the others undertook to arrange everything else.

Mrs. Watson found work for both Alice and Josie. They were kept busy in planting bulbs, so that there might be a display of crocus and hyacinths at Christmas. They also put up flower seeds in little packets, carefully labeling them.

Alice did not like this at all. She said she could not understand why Mrs. Watson did not pay people to do these things. She worked by

fits and starts. Josie was very industrious; everybody praised her. Alice yawned and mixed crocus and grape-hyacinth bulbs in the same pot, and forgot to sift the earth, and declared the work was a great nuisance. Nevertheless she was determined to please Mrs. Watson, and she made a second effort to overcome herself.

Josie had been carefully trained by the Sisters. She looked on her present work as a duty. At the convent she was never specially praised for doing her duty. At Rosebrier she was praised so much that she began to think she had been a heroine for a long time without knowing it. The spectacle of Alice's carelessness confirmed her in this belief. She began to think a great deal of herself. She imagined herself in the most trying and pathetic situations. Suppose the house would take fire? Alice and Rose would run out screaming, of course. Everybody else would be frightened to death, she alone would be cool and calm. She would save the house by her presence of mind, and the whole family would thank her. Josie had to wipe her eyes, so effected was she by this spectacle. Unluckily, she rubbed a grain of dust into her left eye, and she

had to stop work for half an hour in order to get it out.

Mr. Watson came upon the back porch, bowed to Alice, and patted Josie on the head.

"What a sweet, industrious girl that is!" she heard him say to his wife.

"I hope Rose will grow like her," Mrs. Watson replied, in a low voice. "She is setting such a good example to the others. Have you noticed how absolutely truthful she is?"

Josie pretended not to hear, but her eyes brightened and her color rose.

"Nobody ever said that of me!" exclaimed Alice, impulsively. "I like Mrs. Watson better than anybody in the world. I wish I could please her."

"We must do good for a higher motive, you know," answered Josie.

Alice sighed. "I wish I could be good, like you," she said, after a pause. "But Madame Régence never said much about goodness, if we only kept the rules and tried to be stylish. Were you ever scolded?"

"I have some faults," replied Josie, virtuously. "I have been—spoken to."

"Oh, I've been scolded often and often! Mrs. Watson brings my own mother back. I've seen other girls scolded and just tapped by their mothers," she added, with a laugh, "but I never thought anybody would treat me like a daughter. How I wish I were Rose!"

"We must be content with our lot," said Josie, mixing the soil for a hyacinth.

Alice sighed again. She said to herself that she wished Josie would not be such a frump!

Josie pondered on the compliment Mr. Watson had paid her. Was she specially truthful? She had never thought of it before. Well, she must try to deserve his praise. She began to feel something like resentment against the Sisters. Why had they not told her how good she was? They always seemed to think she was no better than the other girls.

The boys united in praising Josie. She always had a needle and a thread at hand; she could sew on a button at once, without using Rose's favorite "Wait a while." She let Bernard read a poem to her, and suggested that he should write one for his mother's birthday on the hyacinth. She put brown paper covers on some

of Richard's books in the neatest way. By Thursday the Watsons felt that they could never part from Josie without tears. The young folk protested that the little girl must stay with them.

All this did no good to Josie. She was like a hothouse plant suddenly put in the full blaze of the sun. She had been well trained; the question was, would she profit by the training or be withered in the blaze of praise and her own self-conceit? A devouring wish to appear good took possession of her. She began to criticise the others, and she felt it her duty to tell them of their faults.

The evenings at this time were especially cheerful at Rosebrier. The "chrysanthemum circle" was taken inside,—that is the sitting-room table was adorned with a great bunch of white chrysanthemums, shaded to pink by the glow of the red shade on the lamp.

The young people, by various arts, induced Uncle Will to tell some reminiscences of his youth in Philadelphia; and at last they drew him into the recital of his early school-days. They could not make him speak in the first

person singular; he was too modest for that. He gave himself another name, and all the persons concerned other names. "I'll tell you this," he said, confidently, "I am 'the Owl.'" His story lasted four evenings, and it ran with a few interruptions.

VII

LONG AGO

HENRY CORBETT ("that was I,—'the Owl,'" said Uncle William) awoke, with a lump in his throat and a heavy weight on his heart. Watermelons were in season, and the late white trumpet lilies in the garden were in bloom. Ever afterwards these things were to be associated in his mind with the deepest gloom. How glorious the watermelon seemed in August, but how sad it was in September! In one month it opened its red mouth and showed all its glossy black teeth in a jolly laugh; in the other, it grinned hideously, because school was about to open. How Harry—he was fond of flowers—would have enjoyed the lilies if school did not loom before him! But now—oh, awful thought!—the day had come, and in two hours nine o'clock would strike!

Harry said his prayers with a heavy heart. He plunged his face and head into cold water,

and wished that he could do that all day. If he could only drive a street-car or an ice-wagon! If he could work at anything!—but school—school!

There was the ominous watermelon at breakfast, and a vase of lilies on the table! Harry's oatmeal porridge choked him, and he could not swallow his coffee. He was only nine years old, but the gloom of sixty years seemed to have settled on him. This was to be his second year at school; he had been there one year, and he knew what to expect. His mother tied the tassels of his little white collar tenderly—boys wore white collars with little tassels nearly forty years ago; she put his new cloth cap on his head—it had a tassel, too; and then she gave him a pair of gloves.

"No," he said, in a broken voice, "I don't want gloves; the boys will lick me if I wear gloves." And he wished he could take off the cap, with its glossy black tassel, and put on a battered old hat. He knew well that his tortures would be redoubled because of his clothes.

A year ago he had barely known how to read. Under his father's tuition, he had reached as far

in the old spelling-book as the picture of the owl. And when the teacher—a little woman in black, who struggled against ninety-five boys every day—had asked him what he knew, he had said he was where the owl was. This had caused much hilarity among her amiable pupils, and Harry became known as "the owl"; though sometimes this nickname was changed to "sissy," because of his white collar and the cap and tassel.

He could endure being called "the owl," but the name "sissy" filled him with woe. And the boys, soon finding this out, whispered, howled, yelled, and shrieked that term of opprobrium whenever they had no other prey to fall upon. No grown person could imagine what pain this gave the boy, whose sole experience since his babyhood had been kindness. Neither his father nor his mother ever knew how much he suffered. But he hailed the close of school as the opening of Paradise. And now school was to begin again!

The atlas—Mitchell's, of course; no other was used in those days—was brought out, and the other books, including a dog-eared catechism, laid upon it. A strap was buckled tightly over

these, and Harry was ready for the fatal plunge. His mother and his two sisters—the latter happily went to the Sisters' school, and had no fears—cheered him from the front steps. How little they knew, he thought, of what men suffered!

He turned the corner; they were out of sight; he was alone, as it were, on a sea of trouble. How wide and desolate the street looked! The white window-shutters seemed to threaten him, the clear panes mocked at him, and the sunshine was a sickly and bilious sunshine. An ice-wagon came slowly to the curb, and, having delivered its load, moved slowly onward over the cobblestones. Harry seated himself on the back step; the driver started his horses, and for a few minutes he enjoyed the bliss of forgetfulness. He felt like a Roman charioteer; he grasped the step with both hands, and held his books between his knees. His courage began to revive; he was afraid of nobody now, although it was a quarter of nine o'clock. If he could only jolt on this way forever!

But this dream of bliss could not last; the gray building in which school was held appeared. The ice-wagon jolted over a rut, and Harry

slipped heavily to the ground with a piece of ice thrown out by the violence of the shock. He stopped for a moment to fill his mouth with a broken lump, and entered the enclosed place in front of the school. There was a crowd of boys collected in front of the narrow blue gate; they were a rough looking crowd. There were no caps with tassels among them, no little white collars; but there were dilapidated straw-hats, greasy jackets, through which shirt sleeves showed; trousers held up by twine, and shoes through which an occasional toe peeped out.

Harry went to the edge of the group and hid behind a tall, red-haired boy. Everybody was anxiously watching the blue gate, so that he was unobserved. He, too, watched the blue gate breathlessly, while the large chunk of ice melted slowly in his mouth. Other boys came behind him and pushed against him. In a minute or so the blue gate would be opened by a boy detailed for the purpose. The group without waited in the delightful expectation of chasing this boy up the narrow alley that led to the school. The pressure against the blue gate was very heavy; consequently when the amateur porter would

draw the bolt, the boys without would fall in on him, and those farther out tumble, in pleasant confusion, over his and their prostrate bodies. If the boy who drew the bolt was quick enough to escape this human avalanche, he gained some time before the whole pack was at his heels, howling and yelling.

Nine o'clock struck; the gate opened, and "Shorty" McGrath was seen rushing up the alley, while a mass of boys struggled and kicked on the bricks at the threshold. Harry, his books clasped to his breast, was pushed along by the crowd. Suddenly the ice in his mouth slipped into his throat; and, as it was a large lump, it stuck there. Harry felt that he was choking; his face became crimson; he tried to speak. The boy next to him thrust out viciously with his elbows, exclaiming, "The owl's in a fit!"

At once two boys seized him.

"He is choking!" one of them said. "Hang him up by the heels."

"The owl has swallowed his slate-pencil!" cried another boy.

Instantly the tall, red-haired boy climbed up on the gate, and, assisted by another stalwart

young ruffian, took hold of Harry's feet. They held him head downward, until it was evident, from his protests, that he might die—not by choking, but from this violent cure. The ice, in fact, had melted before the cure began.

When Harry had been sufficiently churned and battered, the procession tore madly up the alley, and broke into bits, as it were, at the various class-rooms. The timid little lady, with the large tortoise-shell brooch, received her ninety-five in fear and trembling. Harry entered, with a sad heart and a bruised body, the room of the terrible Mr. Masters. Mr. Masters was tall and stout; he possessed hands that seemed to have the power of knocking down an ox; he had a sleepy look, but it was painfully deceptive; there was a legend that he could see with the back of his head. His hair was black and curly, and he had a special dislike for red-haired boys—at least the school said so.

"Corbett," said Mr. Masters as Harry entered, "have you been fighting again? I observed that your garments are somewhat disarranged."

And they were: the immaculate collar was stained and torn, a sleeve had been pulled out of his jacket, and his cap lost. His books were

scattered to the four winds; the catechism, more dog-eared than ever, remaining in his trembling hand.

"Were you fighting *again?*" Mr. Masters demanded, in a voice that made Harry's head swim. The school—the room was quite filled by seventy boys—turned its collective head towards Harry.

"I wasn't fighting," he said, in a weak voice.

"Speak up, sir! speak up!" said Mr. Masters. "No mumbling!"

"I wasn't fighting, sir," repeated Harry; "I was choked by a piece of ice."

Mr. Masters rose from behind his desk and strode towards the little fellow. "Choked by a piece of ice!" Then he laughed. The school, charmed by the hilarity of the great man, laughed sympathetically.

Harry put his head down on the cut and battered desk, and felt utterly lonely and forsaken. Home seemed a thousand miles away, and there was no hope for him in all the world. The school, delighted at the chance, laughed again. Choked by a piece of ice—what an amusing thing!

"Silence!" cried Mr. Masters, shaking his rattan. There was silence at once. The boys looked at one another in amazement. Who could laugh at such a serious thing as choking by means of a piece of ice?

Mr. Masters strode down the aisle, between the desks, and forcibly raised Harry's head, showing his soiled and tear-stained face to the scorn of the school.

"I always knew that you were stupid, Corbett," he said; "but I never before accused you of prevarication. Are you a liar, sir?"

"No, sir!" sobbed Harry.

"Do you still persist in saying that you were choked by a piece of ice, and that this piece of ice tore your clothes, bruised your face, skinned your knuckles, and made you an *object?* Do you mean to say that, sir?"

"Yes, sir—no, sir!" sobbed Harry.

"Do you mean to say that your preposterous plea that a piece of ice forced you into this disreputable plight is to be received or not?"

A cold sweat came out on Harry's forehead; his hands became clammy; he could not answer a word. There was an awful silence; each boy

on whom Mr. Masters' eye casually fell shrank back in terror.

Mr. Masters raised his rattan. Harry felt his flesh creep. After all, he was only nine years old, and he could hardly keep from crying out for his mother. Let us thank heaven that there is something still of the baby in the boy of nine. The rattan was poised when a voice spoke:

"Please, Mr. Masters—he choked,—I saw him choked."

The voice came from James Sweeney, the tall, red-haired boy, who was always in trouble.

Mr. Masters looked at him with dignity. "You saw him choke!" he exclaimed. "I'd believe it if it were anybody else."

The rattan whizzed through the air.

VIII

THE TRIALS OF THE OWL

"It's half past nine o'clock!" said Uncle Will.

"Go on!—Go on——!" exclaimed all the Watsons. And he continued: . . .

That awful whizzing made Harry's heart sink. It seemed to him as if an avalanche dealing death and destruction were about to fall upon him. And the rattan was a thick and powerful one; it could leave welts on the toughest skin; and no matter how thickly a boy spread rosin over the palm of his hand, it hurt all the same. The rattan did not descend; Mr. Masters became aware that Harry was not performing his part in the operation; his hands were held close to his sides.

"Hold out your hand, sir!"

Harry trembling put out his right hand. James Sweeney looked at it pityingly; it was a very small, white hand.

"He choked—he wasn't fighting," said James.

"Tom Callan pushed against him, and something choked him."

"I didn't push him!" cried Tom Callan, a freckled boy, with dark eyebrows that met over his nose. He shook his fist at Sweeney. And well he might; for who knew that Mr. Masters might not turn on him? Sweeney met his look defiantly; Callan's eyes fell, and the school felt that he would take it out of the owl. Mr. Masters did not notice the interruption. The awful stick descended just as Harry's courage deserted him; it struck the desk with great force. Harry had withdrawn his hand.

Mr. Masters' face reddened. "I'll give you three extra for that. Your hand is ready enough to strike and to hit and to maul other boys. I'll give you a taste of it yourself, you young idiot!"

Mr. Masters had no particular dislike to Harry; he always opened the session with an "example." Harry happened to be the best "example" at hand. But the suspense was more than the little fellow could stand; as the stick came down again his head whirled; he fell against James Sweeney and knew no more.

The school decided that this was a clever trick of the owl's, and much better than the free use of the rosin. Sweeney carried Harry out into the hall and poured water on his face, while Mr. Masters unbuttoned his collar. The fresh air and the water revived Harry, who was conducted back to his desk by the kind-hearted Sweeney just as the first class in geography filed to its place on the long bench in front of Mr. Masters' desk. Harry, pale and limp, thanked heaven that he was not of that class; he might sit still for a while. Mr. Masters glanced at him.

"You've escaped this time, my boy," he said; "but if I hear of your fighting again, I'll break every bone in your body."

The first class in geography was absorbed in wondering where the teacher would begin. If he began with the Niger, all would be well; for each boy would get the question he had paid special attention to; but if he should "skip" to the Nile, what safety could there be for anybody?

Tom Callan, unhappily, did not belong to the first class in geography. He was a monitor on this opening day,—that is, he walked up and down the spaces between the desks, and took in-

stant vengeance on any boy who did not sit with his arms folded. Satan can find nothing for folded arms to do,—at least this was Mr. Masters' philosophy. If a boy folded his arms and kept his eyes on his book he was good; otherwise, he was wicked. And so while Mr. Masters heard the answers of the first class in geography, Tom Callan walked up and down, stopping occasionally to whisper into some favorite's ear or to demand tribute. If you paid Tom two agates and ten commons he would not trouble you; you might whisper and not fold your arms, and every time he passed you he would jingle his pocketful of marbles. Some monitors preferred to take chewing gum as a bribe,—not the scented chewing gum of the present refined time; but a thick kind in pink paper, which smelt of kerosene. Others would accept five "humbugs," as the price of liberty. The "humbug" was a square, brown molasses confection, flavored to the highest point with peppermint. But Tom Callan could only be approached with marbles, and they must, if possible, be agates. He took commons under protest, and the boy who gave them to him never felt really safe.

How leaden were the hours! Ten o'clock! Harry watched the slow hand of the clock in despair. In a short time he would be called on to go up to the blackboard to "do" a sum in division, and his head ached so that he could not tell whether it was long or short. And yet there was hope. Mr. Masters had a pleasant way of permitting the very good boys—so reported by the monitor—to leave school at eleven o'clock. The rest remained until twelve. If Harry could only keep "good" until eleven! He folded his arms tightly and tried to fix his attention on his book. The minutes passed. A quarter to eleven came; now Harry knew that the third arithmetic class would not be called before eleven, as the second orthography was on the anxious bench. The second orthography was proverbially stupid. How Mr. Masters glared and sneered; how hearts that could mingle in a stone fight with delight and enthusiasm quailed before his barbed sarcasms!

Five minutes of eleven! Harry's spirits rose; some of his battered books had been found by James Sweeney and returned to him; in five more minutes he would draw the strap around

them and go. He forgot his headache in the delightful vision. During the first week of the session there was no school held in the afternoons. He did not think of his torn clothes. In ten minutes he would no longer be the owl—an outcast—a young ruffian—a hapless victim dodging blows, and words worse than blows: he would be "Harry," a human being again. There would be a nice dinner for him, and the swing in the grape-arbor, and the story-book he had just begun; and in the evening, when he had studied that awful page in the small dictionary, a walk with his father through the twilight streets. Three minutes to eleven, and he was "good" still.

He did not know the omnipotent monitor had his eye on him. Tom Callan, who was afraid of the stalwart Sweeney, had resolved to "take it out" of Harry. He winked at the boys on the back bench, who, being small, were delighted with such an honor, and watched the clock.

As eleven o'clock struck Harry heaved a sigh of relief, and held up his hand to attract Mr. Masters' favorable attention. At once Tom Callan was down on him. "Come out here!" he

whispered. "Your arms are not folded. Come out here!"

He grasped Harry by the shoulders and tried to drag him into the aisle. If he should succeed, the victim would have to sit on a bench near the wall until Mr. Masters would come, at twelve o'clock, and dismiss him with two or three whacks of the rattan. Harry hated this worse than death. Death had no terrors to him; he had thought little about it; but every fibre of his being thrilled with terror of another hour of fearful suspense on the bench, waiting for the punishment which Mr. Masters always inflicted with a hearty appetite.

In the desk was an open slit, into which slates were supposed to be thrust. Harry put the fingers of both hands into this, and clung with all his might. Tom Callan pulled at his collar. Sweeney, who sat next to Harry, grasped his legs. He threatened Callan in a low voice: "If you pull this little fellow out, I'll crunch your bones!"

Callan paid no attention; he pulled at Harry with all his might. The boy on the outer end of the desk—there were four boys at each desk—

now took sides with Callan. He grasped the front of Harry's jacket and pulled with his whole force. Suddenly a treacherous enemy of Sweeney's brought a ruler down on his wrist, and he relaxed his hold. This sent Callan backward, dragging Harry with him. The noise aroused Mr. Masters.

"Bring that boy hither!" he said, in cold, hard tones. The school trembled at the word "hither." It was so elegant, so unusual; only a superior being would say "hither" instead of "here."

"Again!" said Mr. Masters, in sorrowful tones, —"again! *O mores! O mores!*"

A little boy named Moore started up in affright. "Here, sir!"

"Sit down, Moore; sit down. I was speaking in the Latin tongue. Again, Master Corbett, you defy me. Again you presume to quarrel in my very presence. Again your hands are crimsoned with your fellows' blood."

This certainly was an exaggeration, as the only blood visible was coming out of Harry's nose.

Tom Callan shook his head sadly. He looked at the unhappy Harry as one who would say, "So young and yet so wicked!"

"Did he strike you, my poor boy?" asked Mr. Masters, turning sympathetically to Tom. "For a little boy, he has more badness in him than I ever dreamed of."

* * * * * *

"I *must* stop now," said Uncle Will.

"Oh, *must* you?" said Richard, regretfully. "To-morrow night, then!"

"Very well," said Uncle Will.

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IX

HELPLESS

HARRY stood before the great man, trying to keep back the tears that seemed to be choking him. The injustice of the whole thing lay heavy on his heart, and the hopelessness of ever being able to see his way out of it numbed him. He did not hate Mr. Masters—Mr. Masters was too great to be loved or hated; and, besides, Mr. Masters could not be expected to think that a boy had feelings,—but he almost hated Tom Callan. However, all resentment passed into a sense of wretchedness as Mr. Masters spoke again.

"May I ask," he said, in a low, soft voice, which filled the boys with admiration, "what explanation you will give to your fond parents of your tattered condition? Will you tell them that you have not been fighting? And will they believe you?"

"My papa and mamma always believe me."

The school roared. Even Mr. Masters smiled.

"Did you hear what the kid called his old man and old woman? Pa-pa, ma-ma!" whispered Callan to his chum, Joe Comerford.

"Go to the bench. I'll give you your lesson by and by. I'm not your pa, nor yet your ma."

The school actually became hysterical over this delightful joke. Mr. Masters had to frown at last. He said later to a friend that he found wit one of the most excellent means of controlling boys.

Harry went to the bench and sat down beside another culprit, whose fears were not so acute as his. The other culprit was a certain Jeremiah Dolan, who had been put there for propelling balls of putty through a tin blow-pipe at the monitor's head.

"I hit him once," this interesting victim said; "and I am willing to take what I get, as long as I've had my fun."

Harry, in the midst of his misery, envied the young philosopher. If he could only have some such consolation! Nearly an hour of suspense for the aching, trembling, unhappy little creature on the bench. Harry wondered if the clouds—he saw one crossing the patch of sky, as he

looked out the window over his left shoulder—ever went to school. How happy the horses in the street were; they were in the open daylight all day long!

Twelve o'clock was coming,—his heart stood still. He made a little prayer that somebody might save him. And just as the little black hands stood five minutes to twelve o'clock a bright, pleasant face appeared at the door, and beretta in hand, Father Beresford entered. He was so tall that, from habit, he always took off his beretta as he passed through the low door. The sight of his cassock was always a welcome one in the school; for he was sure to break the monotony of the day with a story or some pleasant speech. The half hour in the afternoon he devoted to religious instruction was the only time in the weary day really enjoyed by the best of the boys. As soon as he had closed the door after him the boys stood up; he waved his hand courteously, and they sat down, making all the noise possible. It was an agreeable diversion for them.

Harry fixed his eyes on Father Beresford, as a shipwrecked sailor looks at a light on the horizon.

And Father Beresford, who remembered that he was once himself a boy, caught the glance.

"What, two boys punished to-day?" he asked, in a rich, soft voice. "Let them off, Mr. Masters,—let them off, please. It's the first day of the session, you know. Get your hats, little boys."

Harry and his companion plunged into the mass of hats and caps that encumbered the floor beneath the hat-rack. Father Beresford smiled as he saw them disappear through the door. Mr. Masters shook his head. It was his opinion that Father Beresford would spoil the effects of his discipline. The priest had merely stepped into the room to give the teacher a message about some books. As soon as he had gone Mr. Masters announced the prayer, and, with a wild shout, the school rushed through the narrow blue gateway.

When Harry reached home he found his mother in the garden with a large sunbonnet on her head, picking dead leaves from the geraniums. She stood erect and looked at him severely. He was not a pleasing object: his nose was swollen; there were drops of blood on his collar; his

jacket was torn, and had lost several of its bright brass buttons; the tassel of his cap was gone, and one leg of his trousers—boys had not yet begun to wear knickerbockers—was longer than the other; in fact, the unhappy boy had to hold it with his left hand to prevent its dropping off.

"Henry!" his mother said.

"Oh, I am so glad to get home!" he exclaimed.

"You ought to be glad to get anywhere under shelter in your present condition," she said, severely. "I am ashamed of you, Henry. Mrs. Simpkins tells me that she saw you driving an ice-wagon; I might have foreseen the result. Go to your room at once, Henry."

That "Henry" struck hard at his heart. What had he done to be called "Henry," and to be met in this way at home? Where could he find sympathy? Who would listen to the story of his wrongs? Slowly he dragged his feet to his little room, with white muslin curtains on the windows, a square of gay-colored rag carpet near the bed, and the walls covered with colored pictures of all kinds. His prayer-book, rosary, and crucifix were on a little white table by themselves. He buried his face in the pillow of his

bed, a very wretched boy. In a short time the sound of voices disturbed him. The girls had come home; almost immediately his sisters, Charlotte and Louise, knocked at the door.

X

THE HARDNESS OF HEARTS

Poor Harry raised his tear-stained face to greet his sisters. They were very much alike. They had light hair, plaited in two tails which hung down their backs, and tied with red-white-and-blue ribbon—everybody was patriotic at this time. They wore bright upper garments named after a very fanatical Italian called Garibaldi, and black and white skirts. They both had pink cheeks and blue eyes; they were very trim and neat, and very conscious of being nice little girls—as they certainly were.

"Oh, my!" said Charlotte. "What an *object* you are! Fighting, I suppose?"

"Now, don't blame him," said Louise. "Boys can't help fighting; they're not like *us*."

Harry had not spirit enough to resent this affectation of superiority.

"That is true," replied Charlotte; "but Harry never fights at home. I suppose boys are dif-

ferent when they are among themselves. And they don't seem to love school as we do. *Isn't* Sister Rose sweet?"

"I don't like her as much as Sister Loreto. *She* is lovely! She has changed the flower-stand; it is near my desk now. I don't see how the Sisters manage to keep such nice flowers in the windows all the time. What kind of flowers do you have at your school, Hal?"

Harry made no reply. The question seemed too absurd.

"Whatever flowers they have must be very thorny," observed Charlotte, who passed for a wit. "Just look at his clothes!"

Harry stood up. "What's the matter with my clothes? If they are good enough for me, I don't see why you should complain."

"They may be good enough for you," said Charlotte, going over to Harry's bureau and looking at herself in the glass with complacency; "but you'll have to change them before dinner. I am so glad school has begun. How I love Sister Rose! Don't you love your teacher, Hal?"

"No I don't," answered Harry.

"You don't!" cried Louise. "How wicked you are! We must love our neighbor as ourselves, and Mr. Masters is certainly our neighbor."

"Our neighbor is the man that lives next door," said Harry. "I don't love Mr. Masters."

"Oh, my!" returned Louise. "How can you be so sinful! Sister Loreto says that everybody is our neighbor."

"What *do* they teach at your school? Surely, Father Beresford does not tell you that only the people next door are our neighbors. I'm sure I don't think much of them. Mollie Jones doesn't wear red-white-and-blue; and Sarah, our servant girl, says she thinks they're Rebels. Mollie stuck her tongue out at me the other day, and I just did the same; and," continued Charlotte, growing excited, "she is a mean, stuck-up thing!"

"It is a sin to talk that way against a neighbor," said Harry, gravely.

Perhaps Charlotte's conscience accused her, or perhaps she heard the dinner-bell. She made no reply, but ran out of the room. Louise remained to bestow a parting mandate.

"If papa hears you have been fighting, he'll

be very angry; so you had better dress yourself in some other clothes."

But Harry had not the heart to dress himself. Everybody seemed to be against him. And what had he done? He had jumped up behind an ice-wagon for a few minutes; but that, as he said to himself, was because he "didn't think"; he had not meant to do anything wrong.

Just after dinner his father came up-stairs. He put his hand on Harry's head. "Your mother says you have been fighting, my boy. And Mrs. Simpkins told her that she saw you driving an ice-wagon. I am sorry to hear such stories about you. It is wrong to fight for the mere love of it; and it is dangerous for a lad like you to attempt to drive a wagon in the city streets. Your face shows that you got the worst of the fight, too."

"I didn't drive an ice-wagon, papa. I took a ride on the back step."

"I forbid you ever to do it again, sir," said his father, sternly. "Your dinner will be sent up to you. You must stay in your room all day, as a punishment. A boy has a right to defend himself, but to fight for the sake of fighting shows

a corrupt heart and a vulgar mind. Good-day, sir!"

Harry felt as if his heart would break as his father left the room. He began to feel that he had been very wicked, but he could not exactly say what he had done. He was intensely wretched until Sarah brought his dinner up. It consisted of chops and a baked apple-dumpling. Sarah was very severe in her manner, but he did not mind that, until she told him that her cousin, Tom Callan, had just dropped in to say that he, Harry Corbett, was the worst boy in the school. If Harry had been alone, his tears would have fallen on the baked apple-dumpling. As it was, he kept them back, and made no reply.

Harry knew that if he told the whole story to his father, he would at once be taken from the school. This would have been delightful to him; but he knew, too, that such a thing would wound his mother and Father Beresford. St. Gudule's was the only school for miles around in which religion was taught. Unfortunately, it was near a river, whose bank was inhabited by a changing and very rough population. The parents of the boys sent to St. Gudule's worked too hard

to be able to give much attention to their manners, and their morals were left entirely in the hands of the priests of St. Gudule's, who had rather a hard time in looking after them. There were four or five boys in the lower classes whose parents were both careful and intelligent; and probably there were more in the highest class, taught by old Mr. Rorke, in the room beyond Mr. Masters'. But, as a rule, the fathers and mothers of the boys sent to St. Gudule's knew enough to wish their children to be good, without having the knowledge or the time to help towards that result themselves. St. Gudule's School, then, was not a place in which the manners of the best society were to be learned from association.

Mrs. Corbett was a convert to the Catholic Church, and very anxious that her children should receive a Catholic education. Her husband, though very tolerant, was much in favor of sending Harry to the Kensington Academy, a Unitarian place of education, which had a high reputation as a Latin school. Harry knew well that if he complained about the treatment he had received, his father would gladly seize the chance

of sending him to the Kensington Academy. In that case he felt sure that both his mother and Father Beresford would be unhappy. He knew that the basis of things at St. Gudule's was right, however uncomfortable the surroundings were. He felt, too, that if he told tales out of school to his mother, it would only worry her. Besides, he felt that she might possibly go to Mr. Masters to remonstrate; and he shivered at the possibility of this. He could imagine nothing that would ruin him irretrievably in the eyes of the school so much as "interference" on her part. He determined to endure his sufferings in silence.

And then, with a sigh, Harry changed his clothes, and looked about for something with which to amuse himself. He had read all the "Oliver Optic" books in his room, the "Catholic Crusoe," and "Fabiola." Suddenly he remembered a treasure, "The Scottish Chiefs." It had been lent to him by Sarah. It was in a dilapidated condition—a mass of ragged pages between two greasy covers. Still, it seemed all there. He read five pages, only to find that there was a great gap; then the book suddenly melted away into another story, "The Spaewife." There were

twenty pages of this "Spaewife," which had somehow become mixed up with interesting experiences of Sir William Wallace and Sir Aymer de Valence. Harry was not an expert reader: he had to spell many words, and it was some time before he discovered that some new pages had been dropped in. He was anxious, too, to go on with the story; there was so much battle, murder, and sudden death in it. He was disappointed. After the gap filled by the leaves from the other book was passed, he found himself at page one hundred, the page on one side being thirty-six and on the other sixty-seven.

A further examination showed a terrible state of disorganization in Miss Porter's stately romance. Harry spread all the pages out on the floor, until they nearly covered it. It was hard work to put them together in rotation, particularly as many of the figures at the corners of the leaves had been torn off, and he had laboriously to make out the context. As the type was not very clear, and Sarah and her friends had dropped spots of candle grease here and there, which made the pages stick together, Harry's task was slow. At last he reduced the book to a kind of

order. The afternoon had nearly passed; in a half hour it would be dark. Harry, somewhat tired, drew his chair to the window and prepared to find out what Sir Aymer de Valence would do next. He had finished one more page, when Sarah knocked at the door and flounced into the room.

"Law sakes," she said, "if you ain't reading Esmeralda Blowblock's book! She lent it to me a month ago. Here, you give it to me!" Before Harry could defend the treasure, it had changed hands; for Sarah was more than a match for half a dozen small boys. "Dear me!" she said, adding insult to injury, and wiping the tattered volume with her apron,—"dear me, the idea of your giving it back to me in such a condition! If I remember, it was a perfectly new book when Esmeralda Blowblock gave it to me. And it a present from her dead aunt, too!" added Sarah, reproachfully. "Your ma says you can come down to supper, but you are to behave yourself!"

Harry watched "The Scottish Chiefs" disappear, with hungry eyes. Sarah was inexorable; she said that she could never forgive herself for

keeping the precious book so long from Esmeralda Blowblock. Harry washed his face, combed his hair, and presented himself shyly at the tea-table. His father and mother had evidently forgotten his offenses. The dining-room looked very cozy. There were, to be sure, a group of lilies on the table; and they made him sick for a moment, because they reminded him of school. Charlotte and Louise were gay and talkative. They were telling their father about Sister Rose and Sister Loreto, and the flower-stand, and some tableaux they were going to have for the benefit of sick soldiers.[1] The buttered toast, the hot tea, the pleasant faces, the home-made preserves—raspberry and pineapple,—and the most delectable sponge-cake in the world, made Harry feel as blissful as he had felt for a few moments in the morning on the steps of the ice-wagon.

Mr. Corbett beamed on the two little girls. "Really, Mary, do you know that the Sisters are the most perfect teachers in the world? See how interested the girls are in their school work!"

[1] By an oversight, in the first chapter, the date of this little story was put back about twelve years before its real time.

Mrs. Corbett smiled. "They can spell the most difficult words," she said, with some pride. "I think I heard them spelling a whole column like 'irradiate' this afternoon."

The little girls sat up straight, and seemed lost in admiration of their own acquirements.

"Can you spell irradiate, Harry?" asked his father, still smiling.

The sponge-cake seemed to become as cold and heavy as marble in Harry's mouth, but he swallowed it. Why couldn't people let a boy alone?

"I haven't come to that, papa," he said, after a pause, during which he tried to spell it in his mind. "It's not in our book."

"I am sure Mr. Masters does his best," sighed Mrs. Corbett.

"No doubt," said Mr. Corbett, hopelessly; "but I am afraid he has not very promising material."

Harry was silent, but he blushed. He knew he was only a boy, but he could not understand why people should be always saying so. Until he went to school everybody praised him, everybody loved him; now he seemed to be in every-

body's way. Well, never mind; some day he should be found dead, and everybody would be sorry. And there would be found, hidden under his jacket, a beautiful copy-book, in which would be written hundreds of words that even Mr. Masters could not spell. After that the whole city would wonder why such a clever boy had not been treated better, and the papers would write about Mr. Masters' cruelty; but it would be too late—a second helping of sponge-cake and pineapple diverted his thoughts; he concluded to live.

After supper the girls went through "The Empress Henrietta Waltz" for four hands; and when his father had played a game of checkers with him, and read the war news, Harry was sent up-stairs to study his lessons before going to bed. At nine o'clock he lay down, with the thought that at least there was one whole day between him and school. He said a prayer that he might know his lessons, and then he reviewed the events of the day. He thought with bitterness of the accusation of fighting.

"If Helen were at home," he said, "she'd stand up for me." Helen was his youngest

sister, who was at her grandmother's. Helen was only six years old; but she was very clever, and she and Harry were devoted friends.

And then Harry considered seriously the question of fighting. If it were wrong to fight, of course he wouldn't fight; it would be a sin in that case, and maybe Father Beresford would not let him make his First Communion. But, he reflected, David had fought the great giant. It was in the Bible: Father Beresford said so. He went to sleep, and saw an ecstatic vision of himself in the act of overturning Tom Callan, while Father Beresford blessed him from afar. He was suddenly awakened; his mother had come in to bid him good-night and to kiss him.

"You may stop for Rufus Quesenbury, and take him over to see Helen at grandmamma's tomorrow if you like. So be a good boy, and don't get yourself detained at school."

What happiness to see Helen! A cloud floated over it. He remembered the terrors he should have to encounter on his way down town, and his heart sank. And yet he did not speak of them to his mother; no grown-up person *could* understand. He went to sleep again, and dreamed

that, having passed all perils, he was telling Helen how many enemies he had, like David, slain with his little sling. He awoke once more, as Sarah called to him not to attempt to read and "set himself afire." He remembered his "soaker," which he had left on the shingles of the roof outside his window. His "soaker" was a disc of leather, to which was attached a string. When it was saturated with water, it was placed on some object, the water pressed out of it, and it stuck to that object. Boys sometimes lifted bricks out of the sidewalks by means of this contrivance; and sometimes, if anybody was looking, they replaced the bricks. Harry's "soaker" was new; he put it safely under his pillow, little dreaming that it was to add to the cup of his bitterness.

His mother went into his room later to see that he was comfortable. He was: there was a smile on his face; he had no thought of Mr. Masters or Tom Callan now. The trials of the day had not run into the night. His mother made the Sign of the Cross over him and went away, the smile on his face reflected on hers.

XI

HATRED

THE next morning at school dragged away heavily. The number of the boys was somewhat increased; and, as Mr. Masters always whipped every boy who made his entrance on the second day, Harry escaped; James Sweeney happened to be monitor, too, and Tom Callan had no opportunity to "take it out" of him until after school was over. As some unknown boy had made a noise supposed to resemble the sound of a locomotive whistle, Mr. Masters kept everybody in school until he began to be too hungry himself to stand it longer.

Another new boy, well-dressed, and who added to this evil quality the fault of having a tin slate that would open and shut, had to receive the attention of the school. His name was Philip Darcey; he was thirteen years old, and he knew what was coming. As soon as the crowd of boys surged out of the blue gate, he took to his heels.

This, as Harry said to himself, was the worst thing he could have done.

Half the school followed him, like hunters on the trail of a fox. He had long legs—he was a tall, slim boy,—and he doubled. It was not until he was on the opposite side of the street, in a direct line with the school, that he was caught. This was in front of the tall, four-story house, in which James Sweeney and Tom Callan both lived. On the step of this house Harry had stationed himself. He watched the chase eagerly. He hoped ardently that Philip would escape. He would have been better off if he had stood his ground. In that case he would have had only the cowards against him; for, of all things, the school admired courage. But the sight of the howling crowd and the desire of saving his tin slate had been too much for Philip Darcey. He had yielded, and now his tin slate was tossed from toe to toe, each boy in the crowd taking a kick out of it. He was down, with half a dozen boys on his back. He was entirely out of sight. After a time he arose, weeping and bleeding.

"It's a shame!" Harry said. "It's a shame,—six to one!"

"What have you got to say about it?" asked Tom Callan. "You'd better keep still, or we'll teach you another lesson."

"You will?" put in James Sweeney. "I'd like to see you. You just let this little one alone."

"He's a sissy,—he has no right in our crowd. Why doesn't he stay where he belongs—with girls and babies? I've half a mind to break his head."

Philip Darcey, who was applying a wet handkerchief to his eye, forgot his own woes in the interest of this dialogue. The hope of seeing Tom Callan whipped warmed his heart; the smaller boys, too, hoped against hope. He advanced towards Harry, who stood his ground, and stuck out his right fist threateningly.

"Did I hear *you* say it was a shame?"

Harry swallowed a lump in his throat. It was an awful moment.

"He's afraid! he's afraid!" whispered the small boys, congratulating themselves that they were not in Harry's place. Harry may have been afraid, but he did not show it. Most people would have been afraid with Tom Callan's fist

under their noses. It was a big, red, freckled fist, with bony knuckles.

"Did I hear you say you objected to Phil Darcey's punishment?"

"Yes, you did," said Harry, regaining his voice. "And if Father Beresford knew of it you'd run away soon enough. You're a bully—that's what you are!"

The crowd was appalled. Such words from a boy like Harry Corbett!

"Somebody has put him up to say that!" cried Callan, looking threateningly around. "Was it you, Phil Darcey?"

"No, it wasn't!" whimpered Phil. "I never spoke to him."

And then Callan, with a glance of command intended for those about him, drew off and gave Harry a blow that sent him against the wall.

"Take that, sissy!" he said.

The boys yelled disapproval; they were rough enough, but they believed in fair play. James Sweeney rolled up his sleeves, and, according to the prevailing custom at St. Gudule's, spat with much solemnity on his hands. He approached Tom Callan; and the boys, forgetting Harry,

who was leaning against the wall, still seeing stars from the force of the blow, made a ring. But at this interesting moment a terrible voice was heard. They knew it too well. It was the trumpet tone of Mr. Masters. In an instant there was not a boy in the square, except Harry, who had begun to walk slowly away. Mr. Masters scowled at him.

Harry crept away. Such language was music compared with what Mr. Masters might have said. Finding that he had only run one of his teeth into his under lip, and that there was but one contusion on his forehead, Harry began to revive.

At dinner his mother and sisters naturally thought that these marks were the results of yesterday's conflicts, and charitably took no notice of them. After dinner he was allowed to go into the street to play. There was no common nor playground for boys anywhere around. He could not play ball in the street; even handball was against the rules. Marble and top times were over. He had the faithful "soaker," but he feared that some watchful friend of the family might pounce on him if he used it.

Harry, having no other amusement, lifted several bricks during the course of the afternoon. In time his mother called him, to give him permission to go after Rufus Quesenbury and visit his grandmother. Rufus was easily found: he was making mud pies on a vacant lot near his father's house. Rufus was a fat boy, short, dark-eyed, and very silent. He was a year younger than Harry, but Harry considered him much younger. Rufus ran home to wash his face and hands. He was glad to go with Harry; he was very fond of eating, too, and he knew that he was going to a house where the appetites of boys were not looked on as worthy of contempt and derision. Grandmamma Corbett, like most grandmothers, begged and implored her young admirers to eat; and the more they ate the better she seemed to like it.

Rufus was not long away, but in the meantime Harry found a beautiful red brick pavement—so regular, so clean, so tempting! Surely he would have time just to lift one of the bricks and put it down again—only one. He chose a particularly level one, near the curbstone. He soaked his disc of leather, and lifted the brick easily. Just

as he was looking at it with contentment a policeman turned the corner. In an instant the brick was under Harry's jacket, out of sight, and the policeman saw only a harmless boy, sitting on the curbstone, with his feet in the gutter. He passed on and stood at the next corner. Harry felt that it would be dangerous to replace the brick under the very eyes of the policeman. He would keep it, and bring it back as soon as evening fell —on his way back from grandmamma's, in fact.

And Rufus Quesenbury was waiting for him, too, his hands filled with tokens of affection. These tokens consisted of a large piece of mince-pie and two raw turnips. Poor Rufus had done his best; it was washing day at his house, and the usual perquisites were not to be had. Holding the brick under his jacket with his left hand, Harry, with the help of the other, munched a kind of sandwich made of the mince-pie and the turnip. After a time it occurred to him that it would be more convenient to wrap up the brick in paper. Rufus, having two cents, was sent into the next grocery shop to buy two apples and to ask for a paper bag. He succeeded in getting both the apples and the bag. Harry put the

brick into the bag, and carried it under his arm now; it looked as if it were some nice gift he was taking to his grandmamma's.

The turnips and the mince-pie disappeared, and the boys grew strangely thoughtful as they walked along.

"Are you a good fighter?" asked Rufus, as they entered a wide street, in the middle of which there was a large open market.

"I can climb well—I could always climb well," said Harry, evading the question. It made his heart heavy. He knew what little Quesenbury was thinking of. They were coming to a part of the city inhabited by a race of boys who belonged to a rival fire company—at least they pretended to belong to it. And Harry was supposed to belong to one too, and so was Quesenbury. Harry's was the Delaware, while that to which the present territory belonged was the Schuylkill. Quesenbury's question made Harry wish that he had not put all his agates into his pocket, and that his penknife with the mother-of-pearl handle were safe at home. Quesenbury voiced Harry's feeling, too, when he whimpered: "I wish we hadn't come!"

"Who's afraid?" said Harry, in a weak voice. "They'll not 'tackle' us."

The word "tackle" was a terrible one in the boyish vocabulary. If one boy ventured into the territory of an envious and rival company, he was bidden to deliver all the small portable articles about him into the hands of the guardians of that territory.

"But if they *do* 'tackle' us, what shall you do?" asked Quesenbury, eyeing two boys on the corner. These boys had their hands in their pockets, and they were watching our two friends with interest.

"I'd climb up to the top of the market and drop this brick on them, if they didn't scatter," said Harry, with determination.

"But what could I do?" said Quesenbury. "I'm not a squirrel like you."

Harry did not answer; he thought, with a sigh, that he should have to stick to his friend.

The boys on the corner suddenly uttered a wild yell; it resembled "Yi! yi! yi!" Quesenbury pulled up his collar and drew his hat over his eyes. He might be torn to pieces, but he did not intend to see it done. With a chill of despair,

Harry stood still. It would be useless to run, he knew; for at the sound of that fearful war-cry boys would pour out of every nook and corner. To have his hands free, he thrust the brick underneath his jacket. It almost burst the buttons, and it gave him a strange appearance—an appearance of having been flattened out in front. The boys observed his action. Here was prey worthy of them. They paused a few paces from their victims.

"What hose company do you belong to?"

Harry did not answer.

"Hurry up!" said the first boy. "We've got to address a public meeting in a few minutes, and we haven't any time to lose."

The second boy found this piece of wit so delightful that he doubled up with the laughter.

"I live in the Delaware district," Harry said, while little Quesenbury clung to his cold and clammy hand.

The boys, with another "Yi! yi!" flung themselves on Harry; and in an instant the brick, neatly encased in its brown paper, had changed hands.

"It's something good," said the first boy.

"Let's get off before the others come. There's not enough for more than two."

Off they went, and off in the opposite direction went Harry and little Quesenbury. Breathless and anxious, they reached grandmamma's door. Having carefully wiped their feet on the mat, they were admitted, after the old-fashioned knocker had been gently agitated.

She was glad to see them. After many questions, she called little Helen, who came downstairs in a new white frock, and with her yellow hair beautifully curled. The three played hide-and-seek until tea was ready. The table was splendid! Scarlet sage in a white vase in the centre, three kinds of cake, and ——

"Prunes!" whispered little Quesenbury, in a delighted whisper.

There was no bread and butter in the world like grandmamma's; there were no tongue sandwiches like hers. And how little Quesenbury reveled in the prunes! Four saucers, one after the other, disappeared! Harry, who was not so devoted to prunes, wondered what he did with the stones. His mother had told him to put them carefully on the side of his plate.

Rufus had evidently never received that injunction.

Tea was over. Once in the street, laden with extra pieces of cake and messages, the boys began to be sad. By this time doubtless the brigands had discovered the nature of the booty they had stolen from Harry; and he knew that their revenge would be terrible. Besides, the brick was gone. How could he ever restore it? His conscience troubled him.

"Let us run," he said. It was dusk, and everything had in his eyes a dangerous and threatening look.

"I can't run," said little Quesenbury, dolefully. "Is it true that if a boy swallows an orange seed, a tree will grow out of his mouth?"

"Sarah says so," answered Harry; "but I don't know. Why can't you run?"

Quesenbury groaned. "I feel them growing inside of me. They're sprouting."

What new misfortune was about to overtake them?

"Oh-h," groaned Quesenbury, "I shall die! I was afraid grandmamma would see so many

seeds, and that she would not give me any more prunes, so I swallowed them all!"

Harry stood rooted to the pavement. This horrible revelation appalled him.

"Yes," continued Quesenbury, "in a short time you will see prune-trees a-growing out of me. You needn't plant flowers on my grave,—the prunes will just grow and grow after I am dead. I've heard of such things."

Usually a policeman was a being of terror to Harry. But then he saw the flash of brass buttons with joy.

"Please, Mr. Policeman," he said, addressing a tall one who had neared them, doubtless not unsuspicious, "will you take this boy home? Things are growing in his insides."

The policeman looked at Quesenbury, whose face was pale enough. He asked Harry where Quesenbury lived. Without another word he took him by the collar and led him onward for several squares. Quite a crowd followed, under the impression that the two boys were under arrest. In this crowd was Tom Callan; he grinned triumphantly at Harry, who blushed as he saw his enemy. The policeman stopped at

Rufus Quesenbury's door, handed him in, and Harry ran home.

"I hate Tom Callan,—yes, I do!" he said. "And if I ever get a chance I'll make him feel it. I wish I could get him in my power!"

XII

HOW IT ENDED

After a restless and feverish night, Harry awoke, very wretched. He had not dared to say his prayers, after his declaration of hatred for Tom Callan. School was before him; the pavement outside yawned for the stolen brick, and he might at any moment hear that the prune-trees—Harry at this time looked on the prune as a special fruit—had choked Rufus Quesenbury to death.

At breakfast he heard that little Quesenbury had been saved by means of various unpleasant remedies. Luckily, Tom Callan had not had time to confide to Sarah the fact that he had seen Harry in the hands of a policeman.

Harry started for school. He was very unhappy; he knew that he hated Tom Callan, and he did not want to feel sorry for it. He knew, too, that it was a great sin to hate anybody.

A cloud of smoke and a burst of flame showed

against the sky as he turned the corner. There must be a fire near the school. His heart leaped, —perhaps it was the school itself! Then he rebuked the wicked thought. The boys were all out in front of the school. The tall, four-story house opposite was in flames. Furniture of all kinds was piled in the street; three hose carriages and a number of firemen were adjusting hose to the fire-plug. The back part of the house was burning furiously. The four families living in the house had got out safely—but there was a sudden cry from the boys that there was somebody on the roof.

Everybody looked up, to see Tom Callan standing in a dazed way near a closed trap-door on the roof.

"Throw him a rope!" many voices cried.

But that was impossible. The flames were gaining headway, and the firemen's ladder reached only to the second story. They had been trying to throw a knotted rope to Tom Callan, but he seemed too much bewildered to notice it.

A rickety tin spout ran from the roof to the ground. The firemen looked at it and shook

their heads. It would not bear the weight of a man. The flames grew fiercer.

"Is there any boy here who can take this rope up?" demanded the fireman in command. "The spout might hold a boy."

There was no answer. The fireman tied the rope to a long rope-ladder that had just been brought. He was about to ascend to the roof of the school and try again to throw the rope across the street to Tom. This had failed before.

Harry heard the words. He saw that if something were not done, Tom Callan must die; for the unfortunate boy seemed to have lost his senses. Harry hesitated only to say an act of contrition. "I don't think I hate Tom Callan as much as I thought I did," he said. Then he went up to the fireman. "Give me the rope, please!"

Like a squirrel he went up the shaking tin spout, his heels almost twinkled from one joint to another. The crowd below watched him silently. The boys could scarcely believe that it was the owl.

"I wouldn't do it," whispered a small boy, "if he had hit me that way."

Harry reached the roof. It was not hard work for him. And he forgot the danger until he stood next to Tom Callan. At that moment a gust of wind threw a cloud of smoke around them both. It seemed to get into his throat and strangle him; it hid everything from his view. A groan went up from the crowd below. They believed that both boys were lost. But Harry, murmuring a prayer, drew up the rope. The rope-ladder touched his fingers. Another gust of wind, and he saw Tom Callan leaning against the chimney in despair. He went up to him and touched his shoulder. Tom raised his head and looked at him with lack-lustre eyes.

Harry could feel the fire blistering his cheek. He tied the rope around the chimney. A hundred voices had called on him to do this, but he had not heard them. He led Tom Callan to the edge of the roof. Only then did he seem to realize what Harry meant. He could climb—every boy at St. Gudule's could climb like a monkey. Callan grasped the ladder, and was speedily on the ground. Again a sheet of flame and smoke hid Harry from the view of the crowd below. A slight stream of water from the hose drenched

him from head to foot. The fire seemed to lick the moisture from him. He fell on his hand and knees at the edge of the roof. He grasped the ladder, blinded as he was.

"He's all right now!" cried James Sweeney.

"Thank God!" said Mr. Masters, who stood, white as snow, in the middle of the street.

He was coming down, the little white hands twinkling one below the other, when a kind of sob burst from the crowd. The ladder had caught fire. It seemed as if it would part just below the roof. Mr. Masters turned away, sick at heart; Tom Callan sank down on the pavement, and buried his face in his hands. At the foot of the ladder stood Father Beresford, in his cassock and beretta, his hands uplifted.

Harry's hands twinkled faster and faster. Nobody seemed to breathe. He passed the second story. The smoke hid him again. And when it parted he lay, weak and white, in Father Beresford's arms, with the burning rope-ladder tangled around him.

"I don't hate Tom Callan any more!" he whispered to Father Beresford.

A minute later and the boys were bearing him

on their shoulders through the narrow blue gate. Such shouts, such yells, such enthusiasm! And in the crowd, crying out "Yi! yi!" with all his might, was the boy who had stolen the brick. Faint as Harry was, this sight was very sweet to him. He was no longer the owl, he was no longer sissy: he was king of the school. His trials, as far as St. Gudule's was concerned, were over; and both the man who lost and the boy who stole the brick forgave him.

XIII

"THE STORY OF THE LITTLE GIRL SHE KNEW"

THE preparations for the play were disturbed by the announcement from Uncle Will that he should have to take Alice to New York, to say good-bye to her relative,—one of the Esmond connection,—who was about to sail for Europe. Three days' absence would be necessary. There could be no rehearsals until Alice came back, particularly as she promised to bring some costumes. Uncle Will, laughing, made Mrs. Watson promise to tell a story of her youthful days in Philadelphia.

"Oh, do,—do!" cried Rose. "After Uncle Will's story, I think yours will be lovely! Philadelphia must be such a *romantic* place."

"There was not much romance in my life there," said Mrs. Watson, smiling. "And I dislike to tell things about myself."

"Oh, we'll know it was you," said Rose. "Call it, 'The Story of a Girl I Knew.' Uncle

Will named himself 'Henry'; you just call yourself 'Sarah';—I like that name. We'll know it's you, mother,—so let's begin to-night." And so Mrs. Watson began "The Story of the Little Girl She Knew," and she called herself, "Sarah."

Sarah C. Magruder was fourteen years old. She was tall of her age. She had light blue eyes, reddish hair, a short nose, turned up a little. She could climb a fence, if nobody was looking; she knew the name of every bird in her part of Pennsylvania; and she had the reputation of having found more four-leaved clovers than any girl at her school. She could read and write, but she considered these arts minor accomplishments. She could make more tears in her frocks, and sew them more carelessly, than any other girl. She did many things she did not intend to do, and forgot more things than she remembered. At home she was called Sally, but after her visit to her aunt in Philadelphia she always wrote her name, "Sarah C. Magruder." The "C." represented Cecilia, which had been taken in confirmation.

"Oh, mamma, it couldn't have been you," interrupted Rose.

"It was," said Mrs. Watson, smiling, "and my name is Cecilia."

Her father and mother were not always quite happy about Sarah. She was *such* a tomboy! And they sent her to Philadelphia because Aunt Amelia was so nice and so refined, and had ideas about the bringing up of little girls.

Sarah had never seen her aunt, because her aunt never went to the country. The lady held that every place was "low" except Cape May; and her country relatives never disputed her opinion, for Aunt Amelia was ten years older than Sarah's mother. Her grandfather—she never seemed to remember that this great gentleman was Sarah's mother's grandfather too—had been a British officer at Brandywine, and had settled in the city of Philadelphia.

Aunt Amelia looked down on all other Philadelphians, because their grandfathers had not fought on the aristocratic side. She visited very few people, because there were very few people in Philadelphia worthy of that honor. She kept house alone, with a colored servant so old that she might have been one of George Washington's nurses. She went to market twice a week, and

carried home her own basket, filled with delicious things chosen with extreme care. If the basket was too heavy she sometimes hired a trustworthy boy, whose ancestry she always inquired into,—also if his father took the *Public Ledger;* for Aunt Amelia held that no family could be quite right which did not read the *Public Ledger.* If the boy behaved properly, she gave him five cents and a piece of sponge-cake and raspberry jam.

Aunt Amelia never called on anybody—except some unhappy relatives—that did not live north of Pine Street, south of Spring Garden, and east of Broad. Persons living in any other part of the city were "low" and perhaps wicked. She knew that some of these people actually went to Shippen Street Market, and consequently she had no respect for them, although she did not hate them.

She lived on Third Street, in a little red brick house, with two windows, closed with white shutters; a green cellar-door, which slanted to the pavement; and her house rejoiced in three white marble steps. The bricks of her house were painted a bright red every year in the spring,

and those in the sidewalk were colored every Saturday with some scarlet pigment, after they had been carefully washed with water turned through a hose in the hands of the colored servant.

Inside, the house was wonderfully neat, from the shadowed parlor to the little kitchen in the basement. Green blinds darkened the front windows; outside of these, the white shutters were "bowed"—tied together with black ribbon, in honor of Aunt Amelia's cousin, who had died eight years ago. The parlor, which contained high-backed chairs covered with shining horsehair, and family portraits, was seldom opened except on Sundays. In the dining-room, which adjoined the parlor, there were crisp, white curtains on each window, against which great blooms of scarlet geraniums blazed. Aunt Amelia was celebrated for her geraniums, and people came for squares around to ask for roses in the summer whenever there was a funeral.

Aunt Amelia made great preparations to receive Sally. A new rag-carpet was put down in the kitchen, and the whole house carefully cleaned by the expectant hostess and Judith.

Aunt Amelia then began to worry because strawberries were out of season, and because she had found a nick in one of her best china teacups, which were to be taken down in honor of her niece. The large rose jar—which had been brought from Pekin years before, and which stood four feet from the ground,—was carried up to Sally's room.

At last all the preparations were made, and Aunt Amelia and Judith had nothing to do but wait. Aunt Amelia felt very nervous on the eventful day. She made one of her famous orange puddings with her own hands, and then solemnly opened the window-shutters of the parlor to watch for the coming of her niece. The conductor in whose care Sarah was placed was an old friend of her father, so there was no anxiety about her safe arrival. He had been instructed to send her, in a hansom, direct to Aunt Amelia's. It never occurred to the good lady that she might go to the station to meet her little niece. She had never done such a thing in her life, and this was, perhaps, a sufficient reason for not doing it now.

"She will be like her mother," she said to

Judith, as she made the orange pudding. "Her mother was beautiful."

"She didn't take after you, Miss Amelia," observed the old servant, with a chuckle. "You was always more extinguished than han'some."

"Yes," Aunt Amelia replied, "I was, everybody said. I was a very little girl when General de Lafayette came here; there was a great ball in the Masonic Temple, and my father took me to see the decorations. Even then my bearing was observed."

And Aunt Amelia drew herself up very straight, and waved her be-floured hand with a stately grace.

"It was a long time ago," Judith said. "Third Street wasn't the low-down place it is now."

"Trade has spoiled it," sighed her mistress; "and horse-cars and vulgarity of every kind. I remember the little Misses Willings promenading past this house in pink sunbonnets, and yet they were the best people in the city!"

Both Aunt Amelia and Judith sighed,—a long, sad sigh.

"O Judith!" Aunt Amelia cried suddenly, "*did* you clean the knocker on the front door? Dear, dear! I hope you did. What would Sally think?"

"Of course I did," answered Judith. "I forgets nothing."

Aunt Amelia sighed in relief. No door-bell had ever desecrated her house; she abhorred the modern jangling instrument as much as she hated gas-light.

"There is only one thing I could wish changed," Aunt Amelia said. "Sarah is a Catholic; she will have to go to mass,—as I believe they call it."

"S'pose so," said Judith.

"To think of her mother having married an Irishman,—to think of her having changed from Rosabel Wharton to Mrs. Magruder!"

"The watermelon by any other name would taste as sweet, I've heard one of our ministers say," remarked Judith, consolingly; and she added with a chuckle: "An' so would hot corn an' peppery pot!"

"It can't be changed now. I suppose Sarah will be quiet and reserved and well-bred. I am

sure her mother has taught her to enter a room properly and to make tea. Judith, as the currant-jelly has turned out well, we'll have Mr. and Mrs. Silas Hingginbotham, from Germantown, to tea, just to show our niece off a little."

"I can't have 'em unless you give me ten days' notice. You know the best table-cloths are in the wash."

"Dear me! Well, I give you ten days' notice."

Aunt Amelia put on her gray merino gown, with a white lace collar, and went to wait in the parlor.

Presently a clatter of wheels sounded on the cobble-stones in the street, and the knocker struck the door.

Aunt Amelia smoothed her gown carefully, and took a hasty glance at the little square mirror between the windows. She must appear perfectly trim before Rosabel's daughter,—Rosabel was always so neat.

Judith opened the door, and a figure bounced into the narrow hall, and then into the parlor, to hug Aunt Amelia with the force of a young bear. It was Sarah, of course!

"Why, you are not a bit like mamma!" Sarah said, turning her slight little aunt around with ease.—"Not a bit! Oh, tell the driver to bring the darlings right in!" she added to Judith, who stood looking through the door, her teeth one flashing line of white,—she had never seen Miss Amelia treated so, and she rather enjoyed it.

Aunt Amelia was dazed. The girl was not at all like her mother. She had none of the rose-bud tints of Rosabel, nothing of her repose of manner, none of her grace. How could such a creature ever live in the quiet house on Third Street!

The driver ascended the steps, after Judith had commanded him to wipe his shoes, and, obeying Sarah's instruction, brought two small pigs, each with a blue ribbon about its neck, into the room.

"Aren't they lovely!" exclaimed Sarah. "Mamma doesn't know I brought them,—Sam just slipped them into the carriage as we were leaving. Aren't they pretty?"

"Oh, but you don't intend to keep them here, dear child?" asked Aunt Amelia, in consternation.

"Why not?" And Sarah looked at her aunt in surprise. By this time her trunk and bag had been carried up to the room over the dining-room.

Judith stood irresolutely, holding a large coop in which a young turkey was imprisoned.

"Sam sent it:—he thought it would be nice to have it for Christmas,—you can fatten it, you know."

"It's a long while to Christmas," Aunt Amelia said, wondering what her young relative would produce next.

"Wasn't it good of Sam to think of it? He is coming to see you some day."

Aunt Amelia dimly remembered Sam—Sarah's brother—as a tall, raw-boned boy, who had a habit of breaking everything he touched; and she shuddered. Judith bore the pigs and the turkey into the back-yard, and Sarah took off her hat and jacket. Aunt Amelia kissed her solemnly on the cheek, and asked her if she would have some tea.

"I am not fashionable," she remarked. "I hope your mother will not be shocked when she hears I dine at twelve o'clock, like my

mother and father before me. We always have tea at six."

This apology was lost on Sarah, who had never been accustomed to great regularity, and who knew nothing whatever about fashion.

"I hope you will excuse my simple tea. Of course I cannot attempt to give you anything elaborate. My sister Rosabel always had such a taste for cooking! I have not much to offer you. I am really not like those new people who have all sorts of luxuries."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" cried Sarah, impulsively. "Mamma never said you were so poor. I'm glad I came now; I am strong and I can work, aunt. And I am sure when papa knows it he'll send you all you need, he is so kind——"

Aunt Amelia checked her niece with a haughty stare. Judith threw open the folding-doors and revealed a table loaded with cut-glass and the frailest white china.

Sarah had never seen anything so brilliant in her life. The table was lit by a softly shaded lamp, and the little girl made an exclamation,—

"Oh, how pretty!"

Aunt Amelia was secretly pleased, though she

preserved an unmoved expression. Sarah was pressed to eat six different kinds of cake and as many kinds of preserves, while her aunt kept up a continual wail over the difficulty of getting anything good in the market just then.

"I know," she remarked, when the iced orange pudding was brought in, "that in the country you always have everything so nice and fresh!"

"We children always have oatmeal in the evening," answered Sarah, gazing with admiration at the artistic pyramid of pudding dotted with preserved strawberries.

Aunt Amelia shook her head, and said to herself that Rosabel was doubtless a poor housekeeper. Her heart warmed to her niece; she could imagine no more dreadful fate than to be the child of a poor housekeeper.

After tea—in cups so small and light that Sarah expected them to break if she looked at them—Aunt Amelia washed the china and silver herself, and she and Sarah went into the darkened parlor. Sarah looked out the window at the street-cars and the hurrying wagons with interest. Such a noise!

"How can you sleep here?" she involuntarily asked.

"Sleep?" asked Aunt Amelia, in astonishment. "Why not, dear child? I have slept in this house for about fifty years, and I have a clear conscience."

Sarah took this as a rebuke.

Aunt Amelia sat in silence, with her hands folded in her lap, for a while. Then she asked solemn questions about her sister and the family at home,—about Sam and Alice and Eugene and Georgina and little Amelia. Sarah knew that her aunt did not approve of her father, and she resented the omission of his name.

"Papa sent his regards," she said at last.

"Ah, indeed!" And then Aunt Amelia added, following her habit of thinking aloud: "I don't see what Rosabel ever saw in him!"

Sarah arose. "Aunt," she said, out of the darkness, "I wish you would ask your servant to get my trunk and bag and the pigs; I am going home. You may keep the turkey, because Sam sent it. I will not stay here another minute."

Aunt Amelia was amazed at this outbreak.

The child was a savage, who had never learned to conceal her feelings.

"Sit down," she said, noticing that Sarah had risen from her chair.

Tears filled Sarah's eyes. She was glad it was dark, so that her aunt could not see them.

"No," she answered, in a trembling voice; "I would rather go home,—indeed I would. If you do not like my father, you will never like me, and I could not force myself to stay in a house where I ——"

Aunt Amelia interrupted her.

"Do not be silly, child. I have nothing against your father except that he married into our family. But I shall not mention him again, since you dislike it. I cannot let you go out of my house to-night. Good gracious!—the idea of such a thing! What would people say? You had better stay your visit out; I dare say we'll get on. Now, go to bed."

She kissed her niece very coldly on the cheek, called Judith to give her a candle, and Sarah sadly went up-stairs to the little back-room, where her trunk already stood. The air was scented from the thousands of dried rose-leaves

that had been added year after year to the contents of the great china jar in the corner. Sarah felt a vague sense of comfort steal over her; the roses would soon be in bloom at home, and the thought of home raised up her heart. She lit her candle, took her little statue of the Blessed Virgin and her rosary from the trunk, and said her prayers. In half an hour she was dreaming that the roses were in bloom at home, and that she was among them.

The next morning she awoke with a weight at her heart. She could not explain what it meant at first, but when she heard Judith's voice calling her she knew that she was not among the roses at home. She dressed hastily and went down-stairs. Her aunt had gone to market. Judith greeted her cheerily, and told her to walk in the yard while she made a fresh cup of coffee.

The yard contained some chrysanthemums and a number of rosebushes just bursting into leaf. It was scrupulously kept. As Judith said, "one might eat a dinner from the brick walk." Sarah looked at the high, board fence, and felt a great desire to fly away. She wished she were a lady-

bird or a sparrow, that she might go over the boards and far away. How could she ever live here! It was so different from home! And yet she must stay, for she had come with a purpose.

Sarah knew that her father was not rich. There was a mortgage on the farm, which he was slowly paying off. Sam wanted to go to college. He had finished the course in Father Ready's school; he was ambitious, and he felt that he could help his father, if he could get a good education. But there was no money for Sam,—no money for anything or anybody, except the mortgage; and so when her mother told Sarah that she was to represent the family at Aunt Amelia's, she made up her mind to learn how to earn some money. Sam had often told her what he would do if he once got through college. He would pay the mortgage off, he would buy a new piano, he would send his sisters to the best schools in the country,—what wouldn't he do? Sarah was fired with the hope of helping him. She had dreamed that Aunt Amelia would sympathize with her, but she had no thought of that now. She would have to observe and think a great deal, and then act.

Judith called her. There was a dainty omelette, coffee of the clearest kind, and crisp rolls. Judith wondered whether Sarah had ever seen anything like *that* before. She stayed in the room on the pretense of keeping away the flies with a feather fan, although no fly had yet made its appearance.

"I heard you talkin' back to Miss Amelia last night, honey; and I was jest glad. She had no business to treat you as if your mother had married a nigger!"

Sarah's coffee almost choked her.

"Not but what the Whartons were great people, and of course you know what the Irish sometimes are. We never had any Irish people in the family until Miss Rosabel married your father, and then Miss Alice married another Irish person. She's dead; her children live somewhere in Southwark; we never visit them unless there is a death."

"Have I really cousins in this city?" asked Sarah, with sparkling eyes.

"Oh, yes! But we never took much stock in them, and I don't think Miss Amelia cares for them; they're working people. We never

worked until we married into the wrong families."

"Oh!" Sarah said, and her heart sank. She had come hoping to learn to earn money in some way; she was unprepared for this view of life.

"Drink your coffee, honey. It was the old Judge that taught me to make coffee like that, when I lived down near the old coach factory with a no-account white-trash family; but the old Judge used to drop into my kitchen jest to pass the time of day. He was a slave to an old judge of the court, and he always kept the title. Bless you! many a time *he* saw the headless horseman drive right down into the river!"

Sarah was all attention, and Judith was delighted.

"Yes, the coach factory was once a great house; it belonged to some big-bug. And one night somebody murdered a coachman who was driving over the lawn; and the coachman, without his head, dashed, horses and all, straight into the river!"

"What river?"

"The Delaware, of course."

"Was there anybody in the coach?" asked Sarah.

"Lots," responded Judith, in a sepulchral voice; though she had never before considered the inside of the coach, the headless horseman always having been the principal character in the legend.

"Did you ever see him?" Sarah asked.

"No," said Judith, regretfully; "but Miss Amelia dreamed of him the night before Miss Rosabel was married. She took it as a warning against her marrying a Catholic,—you know what them Catholics are!" Judith continued, forgetting whom she was addressing.

"*I* am a Catholic," said Sarah, reddening; "but I hope you won't judge Catholics by me,—I'm not good enough."

"You were brought up that way, but I guess Miss Amelia will bring you around to the narrow path. I used to be a Methodist, but she argufied with me until I joined the 'Piscopalians. If anything should happen to her, I don't know as I wouldn't go back."

Sarah had finished her breakfast; she helped Judith to wash the dishes, and then went into

the parlor and opened the shutters of one of the windows. She remained at the window until Judith came in and closed it, saying,

"We never open our windows in the morning. It isn't respectable. Miss Amelia would be powerful mad if she saw that the shutters weren't 'bowed.' You'd better tidy up the rooms up-stairs until she finds something for you to do."

Sarah obeyed meekly.

Several days passed. The afternoons were spent in sewing,—not with a machine; for Aunt Amelia looked on sewing-machines as vulgar. Sarah, who was more at home in hunting for eggs or in weeding flower beds, hated the work; but she had to endure it from one o'clock until six every afternoon. On Saturday Aunt Amelia said she might read "Jack Halifax," a little book, with pictures in it of little girls with very short-waisted gowns, in the old fashion. It was about a boy that went to sea. There was one story in it at which Sarah laughed,—the story of two country boys from New Jersey, who thought a gilded mirror frame must be solid gold. When she had finished this she was offered Watson's

"Annals of Philadelphia," the only other book in the house, except the Bible and Young's "Night Thoughts." She sat, instead of reading, looking out the window, and thinking dismally of home.

"I don't see why that child mopes so!" she heard her aunt say. "I guess we had better not ask the Hingginbothams until we see how she turns out. I don't see why she doesn't enjoy herself: she has every luxury."

"She didn't like your giving the little pigs and the turkey to the milkman," said Judith.

"I can't help that," answered Aunt Amelia, from the dining-room. "She ought to have had better sense than to bring the nasty creatures."

"I'll open the new preserved plums to-night," said Judith, from the kitchen, "and see if they won't cheer her up. If they don't I wash my hands of country people."

A mist came into Sarah's eyes. As if preserved plums could pay for the loss of father, mother, Sam, and the rest! To think of the dear little pigs being called "nasty creatures"! When her aunt entered the parlor poor Sarah was in tears. This made Aunt Amelia uncomfortable.

"Dear me," she said, "I wish you would be more cheerful! I am sure you have everything to make you happy. Think of the ragged children that live in courts and alleys and little streets!"

"They have their mothers—and Sam," Sarah answered, sobbing.

"The child is crazy!" Aunt Amelia said to herself. "But I can't send her home yet."

On Sunday Aunt Amelia, groaning in spirit, prepared to take Sarah to church. It was bad enough to have to forego her own morning service at St. Peter's, but to enter a Romish mass house! She shuddered at the thought. If anybody should see her,—the Hingginbothams, for instance! She half resolved not to go. But Aunt Amelia believed that it was wrong to let a young girl walk in the streets alone. Things had been different in the old days; but at the present time there were so many "new people," whose grandfathers nobody ever heard of, that the streets were positively not safe.

There was a great struggle between inclination and duty. She hated from her heart the necessity of entering a Catholic church, and yet she

could find no excuse for preventing Sarah from doing so. She could not let her go alone: it would not be proper. She could not send Judith with her: Judith must stay at home to get dinner ready; and for fifty years dinner had never been a minute late in Third Street on Sunday. Aunt Amelia certainly deserved some reward for the victory she gained over her prejudices.

At ten o'clock she set forth with Sarah for the high mass at St. Joseph's Church. How lovely and solemn the old church appeared to Sarah! The air was so sweet that it seemed to have been embalmed for a hundred years in myrrh and frankincense. The red-covered windows cast a soft glow over everything. There were lilies on the altars, and their perfume seemed to rise visibly from among the clustering lights.

"Oh," cried Sarah, involuntarily pressing her aunt's hand, as they entered a pew—Sarah with a low genuflection, Aunt Amelia bolt upright,—"oh, aunt, I am at *home!*"

This took Aunt Amelia by surprise; and at the Offertory, when a rich, deep contralto voice—a voice that gave a new meaning to the Latin it uttered—rose in the "*O Salutaris*," Aunt Amelia

felt a vague understanding of Sarah's words. The voice sank low, weighed down by the tenderness of yearning faith, thrilling every heart with the poetry that is felt but seldom uttered. It filled the church; for the worshipers, there was for a moment in that building nothing but the Blessed Sacrament and that voice,—the one adored, the other adoring. Tremulous with love, it went on, mingling the sonorous Latin words with the silver links of the melody; it seemed to carry all loving human hearts in its current to the door of the tabernacle. The organ music, always so majestic, was but a ripple to the dignity and breadth of tone of the voice. At last, with all the fervor of hope, of love, of longing—like an ocean wave that loses itself in the bosom of the mother for whom it longs,—the voice uttered the words:

"Nobis donet in patria,"

as they have never been uttered in any church but old St. Joseph's and by that voice.

Aunt Amelia had forgotten herself for the first time in many years; and when, at the end of the mass, she rose to go, she was not surprised at the

gentle look in Sarah's eyes. She forgot to wonder whether Judith had burned the roast beef,—the first time in her career as a housekeeper she had omitted to do so.

Aunt Amelia was in a softened mood; but she did not show it in any way, and how was Sarah to know it? They walked on in silence. The sun was hot, and Sarah asked her aunt if she might raise her parasol, but Aunt Amelia said nobody ever thought of putting up a sun umbrella until the middle of May. Sarah saw children running along the sidewalks, and she longed to join them in a romp. The houses on either side of the narrow street seemed to draw closer and to stifle her. Oh, if she were only at home! At this hour the family was driving over the country road on the way from mass. Her heart sank at the thought of the dreary afternoon before her. As there is no unhappy episode in life without some consolation, Sarah found hers in wondering whether her aunt would let her go to vespers or not. She might possibly assist at benediction and hear the wonderful voice again.

Judith received Aunt Amelia with a look of reproach.

"You're five minutes late, Miss Amelia," she said. "I can't be 'sponsible for the victuals if this goes on."

Aunt Amelia apologized. Sarah ran up-stairs to smooth her hair. The little party sat down to the succulent roast beef and its accompaniments, while Judith waited. She did not speak until the feast was crowned by a lemon pie.

"There!" she said, triumphantly.

Sarah admired the pie honestly.

"I wish I could make a pie like that," she said. "I can make dried-apple pies. Sam likes them in winter."

Aunt Amelia and Judith exchanged glances of horror.

"Poor, poor child!" murmured Judith, helping Sarah to a large slice of her confection.

Dried-apple pies! Aunt Amelia shuddered at the thought,—the husks of the prodigal, in her estimation, were preferable to such things. She thought, with a sigh, of the sufferings of Rosabel.

After dinner Aunt Amelia took up her Bible and shut herself in the parlor. Sarah escaped

to the kitchen, but Judith would not let her touch anything.

"I was brought up in the 'pinion that it's a sin for white folks to work on the Sabbath, so you needn't try to help me," that self-sufficient body remarked.

Sarah sighed. What could she do? She might go up-stairs and sit in her room with the rose jar; but the prospect was not attractive. She perched herself on one of the kitchen chairs and watched Judith, who hummed to herself, "Oh, let my people go!" It was a mournful cadence, and when she ceased a large, early fly against the window-pane seemed to take up the air.

Sarah felt utterly weary and dreary. With all her heart she wished she were home. Judith sang louder:

"Moses saw the prophet-land,—
  Let my people go!
And old Aaron raised his hand,
Leading on the godly band,—
  Let my people go!
Pharaoh danced and Herod sang—"

"Herod wasn't alive then," said Sarah, becoming interested.

"Much you know about it!" replied Judith, contemptuously. "You don't know your Bible, —Romish people don't read the good Book. The hymn says so, and the man that made the hymn ought to know,—

> "Pharaoh danced and Herod sang,
> And the cymbals went clang, clang,—
> Let my people go!
> Job he moaned and moaned and wept;
> Daniel, all the lions he kept
> Waiting down below.
> Mary prayed and Martha sewed,
> John preached all the words he knowed,—
> Let my people go!"

"I don't think it is right to jumble things together that way," Sarah said. "I think you might find a better hymn than that."

"It's good 'nough for *me*," answered Judith, with dignity; "and it ought to be good 'nough for people who don't know whether the Bible's a book or a hoss."

Sarah did not answer at once. Judith was offended. She turned her back to the visitor. But she could not keep silence long.

"What do you know about the good Book, anyhow?"

Sarah began at once the parable of the sower.

"Yes, that's in the Bible," said Judith, when Sarah had finished. "But I don't believe you know any hymns. Laws! the 'Piscopalians have no good, rousing hymns like the Methodists! I don't mind telling you, chile, because you're close-mouthed,—but it's my 'pinion the 'Piscopalians are bound straight for the bad place. None of 'em's got religion. I've got to humor Miss Amelia by pretending to believe in 'em; but when she drops off sudden some day I'll just go back and get washed in the waters of life. I won't have much to do then, and I can think of my latter end."

Sarah looked shocked.

"But suppose you die first?"

"I ain't going to die first," answered Judith, with a wink and a chuckle. "All Miss Amelia's family, except your mother, died first, and I was put on this earth to see 'em all buried. I don't believe you know any hymns, you poor chile!"

"Oh, yes I do!" returned Sarah, and she began,—

"Daughter of a mighty Father,
Maiden patron of the May,
Angel forms around thee gather,
Macula non est in te!"

Judith listened until Sarah had finished the first stanza. Sarah had a low, sweet, flexible voice, which she managed very well; and as her mother made her practice every day with the piano accompaniment, her voice had not the tendency to flatness which most young and untrained voices have.

"I like that," said Judith, taking the other chair. "Sing more."

Sarah tried the hymn she knew best,—

"When shepherds watched their flocks by night—"

She forgot herself. She was back in the farmhouse. It was Christmas Eve. Father, mother,—all sat around the old fireplace waiting to start for midnight mass. She felt the cool night wind against her brow; she heard the horses' hoofs striking the hard road sharply. The children were all bundled up in the big wagon; the stars seemed to cut the sky, like great silver dagger points,—

"Who is singing?"

Sarah's voice rang out clearly with "Alleluia! Alleluia!"

"Who is singing?"

"My laws!" cried Judith. "I'se done forgot that ole missus was a-reading in the front room!"

Usually Judith's speech showed the effect of her association with Aunt Amelia, but when excited she relapsed into the plantation dialect.

Aunt Amelia came into the kitchen, carrying the Bible, with her thumb in the second chapter of Isaias.

Sarah shrank back, somewhat afraid, and yet feeling some joy,—perhaps her aunt would send her home!

Aunt Amelia's eyes were not as cold as usual: there was a soft look in them.

"My dear," she said, in a kinder tone than usual, "you have Rosabel's voice. I thought for a moment I heard her again when she used to join with my mother in 'She Wore a Wreath of Roses,' or 'We Met, 'twas in a Crowd.'"

"I can sing both," said Sarah, eagerly.

"Not on the Sabbath, dear," replied Aunt Amelia. "But what a lovely voice you have!"

"Do you think so, aunt?" asked Sarah, with sparkling eyes. "Oh, I am so glad! Do you think I might learn to sing well enough to make money?"

Aunt Amelia became cold at once.

"I cannot answer that question. In our family we have never considered money-making the principal object in life. I dislike to hear a child talk in that sordid manner."

Sarah looked up, appalled by this change of tone. Aunt Amelia opened her Bible again and left the room.

"We was never in trade," Judith said, "until we married among the Irish, and Miss Amelia feels it very much. To-morrow, if you are very good and help me wash the dishes, I'll show you our coat of arms. We keep it up in the garret, for Miss Amelia thinks it would be oshtentious to show it round. Why, bless you, chile, you're crying!"

"Oh, I can't help it!" said Sarah, putting her head down on the flour-barrel. "It seems so lonely. I don't mind the little pigs being sent

away, for city people don't look at things the way we do in the country; but it pains me to be looked at by—by—Aunt Amelia."

"Oh, laws, honey! don't take on. These blue-blooded people can't help their looks; and, then, she is a 'Piscopalian, and 'Piscopalians always feel as if they owned the earth. Don't cry—don't!"

"I'm sure I don't want money to spend on myself—I want to send Sam to college,—and I just want to do some honest work. I sold all my strawberries last year to the city family that moved into the Lane, and I haven't spent a cent of it."

"Dear me!" said Judith, sympathetically. "I always said Miss Amelia had too much proper pride. Don't cry, dear—don't!"

Sarah's sobs came thick and fast. Judith went to the cupboard and looked for some supreme delicacy which she might minister to a mind diseased, and pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow.

"Here, dear," she said, after a mental struggle,—"here's the last but one tumbler of pineapple jelly. It's lovely. I was keeping it for the Hingginbothams."

"Oh, I can't eat now—I can't."

Judith shook her head in despair. Her power of consolation seemed to have failed. But her heart came to her aid.

"Tell me about Sam, chile," she asked.

This was what Sarah wanted. Her heart warmed to the old woman.

"O Judith," she said, "come to vespers with me, and as we go along we'll talk about home; and you'll see the loveliest sight and hear the loveliest music!"

"You wouldn't walk in the street with me, chile. The ole folks didn't mind it, but the young ones don't like to be seen with a culled pusson."

"How foolish!" Sarah exclaimed, drying her eyes.

The knocker sounded. Judith went out, remained a few minutes, and came back to say that Sarah was wanted in the parlor.

Aunt Amelia could hardly be distinguished in the cool gloom.

"Judith has asked permission to take you to the afternoon service at the Rom—at your own church. Mr. Hingginbotham's man-servant has

just been here with the message that he and his wife are coming to-morrow evening."

Aunt Amelia watched Sarah for the effect of these words.

Sarah only answered: "Yes, aunt." Her mind was entirely occupied with the thought of vespers.

"You will put on your best frock and behave properly. The Hingginbothams are very particular. They are among our best people. They live on Spruce Street."

"Yes, thank you, aunt."

Sarah tried to show that she felt the last assertion to be impressive.

"They go to the Assembly, where they often met poor Rosabel in her better days."

Sarah was silent.

"They are always invited to the Assembly, with their niece, Miss Cadwalader Rittenhouse."

"Yes, thank you,—thank you very much, aunt," said Sarah.

"What are you thanking me for, child?" demanded the lady, sharply.

Sarah blushed and stammered: "I don't

know—that is, you're so kind not to be cross —I mean——"

"You may go now with Judith," said Aunt Amelia. "I hope you will keep your wits about you to-morrow evening. The Hingginbothams are accustomed to the best society."

Sarah escaped, with tingling ears. After all, to-morrow was to-morrow, and to-day, with a walk to vespers, was to-day. She was glad at heart.

Judith trotted contentedly by Sarah's side down Third Street, which was rather dull and quiet on Sundays. It was not often that she went out. She was conscious of the splendor of her red velvet bonnet, in the fashion of the year '65—very high in front, with this front filled with yellow roses. Her shawl was red, with a border of palm-leaves. She wore brown gloves and a much-flounced silk frock. The odor of musk, in which she delighted, followed her as she walked.

Sarah enjoyed her pride in her appearance. Indeed, Sarah's taste in dress had never been very highly cultivated, and I am afraid she thought that Judith was a thing of beauty.

Judith told Sarah the history of the various houses, now stores or offices, they passed. Finally she returned to the Hingginbothams.

"You mustn't be afraid of 'em," she said, consolingly. "They're nice people, though they are so blue-blooded. And if Mr. Hingginbotham is a 'Piscopalian, he doesn't put on airs. His wife, she was a Quaker, though I believe she goes to his church now."

"Is that the Assembly?" asked Sarah, recalling a remark Aunt Amelia had made.

"Oh, laws, no!" said Judith, chuckling. "Where *have* you lived? The Assembly is a dancing party, where only the ee-light go. It's not a church,—the idea!"

Sarah felt ashamed of herself, and said nothing until they reached the narrow way which leads to St. Joseph's Church. When they entered the church Judith wanted to go into the gallery, but Sarah held her shawl and made her go into a pew with herself.

"I guess the white folks will think I'm mighty impudent," she whispered. "Golly! if there ain't two niggers as black as the ace of spades right in front of us!"

The organ pealed forth, and vespers began. Judith was very still, and soon, to Sarah's surprise, she joined, with the unerring musical tone of her race, in the *Gloria.*

When benediction came the voice Sarah had heard in the morning rolled over the heads of the congregation in the *O Salutaris;* other voices mingled with it, but the rich, earnest tones of this contralto were heard above them all. The voice sang alone the words,—

"Nobis donet in patria."

"What's she sayin'?" asked Judith.

"She says she wants to be forever at home—in her true home with God," Sarah whispered, motioning Judith not to speak again.

Judith nodded.

The music of the deep voice thrilled Sarah. She prayed with all her heart that she might one day sing like that; and after benediction was over she asked her patroness, St. Cecilia, to grant her this gift above all others.

Judith proposed that they should take a short walk.

"I'll show you the cradle of American Lib-

erty," she said. "It's the place where George Washington wrote the Emancipation Proclamation—I think a heap of your church," she added, abruptly. "I think I'll go there next Sunday. I like the way colored folks is treated. And the Lord must be pleased with all those beautiful lights and flowers. And that music—it was like heaven! I do wonder what she was sayin'! I wish you'd tell me."

"I could read it for you out of this book if we could sit down," Sarah said, showing her prayer-book.

"Law's sakes, chile!" chuckled Judith, "the city isn't the country, and you can't sit down on the pavement as if you were in a field. But we'll just go into Washington Square and find a seat."

In a very short time the little girl was feasting her eyes on the soft green of spring grass and trees.

"How pretty it is!" she said. "Do the children play here?"

"Not on the grass," answered her companion, severely. "They can come and look at the grass if they like."

Judith chose an isolated bench, and, having

carefully dusted it with her handkerchief, she told Sarah that she might sit down. Sarah then read the English translation of the psalms to her, and pulled out her rosary and showed her how to use it.

"Well, well," she said, "this beats everything!"

She admired Sarah's beads so much that Sarah told her she might keep them, if she would promise to say some prayers on them every day.

"I'll teach you the 'Hail Mary.'"

"Law's sakes!" said Judith, "to think that I'd be listening to Romanist talk from a little girl! Well, my soul's my own, anyhow; and if Miss Amelia denies it I'll just sass her to her face."

Sarah tried to show Judith how wrong this resolution was, but without effect.

As they walked around the State House, which Sarah looked at with awe—for she was well read in United States history,—Judith prattled about the past story of Chestnut Street.

"Miss Amelia pretends she remembers all about Lafayette and the other generals, but she only thinks she does. Why, she's only a little over sixty-five years old!" said Judith, contemptu-

ously. "She was fifteen years old when she came to live in Third Street. My memory goes back to I don't know where—what are you wiping your eyes for?"

"The trees make me homesick."

"I don't see how anybody can be homesick in Philadelphia."

"Oh, yes, I am!" said Sarah. "I wish I were home! They are just having tea now."

"What do they have for tea?" asked Judith, with keen interest.

"Oh, tea and bread and cottage cheese, and sometimes cake!"

"Cottage cheese! What's that?" demanded Judith, on the alert for any new dainty.

Sarah described it as well as she could.

"You can't mean smear-case!" exclaimed Judith, scandalized. "I believe you do. Law's sakes! the idea of calling smear-case cottage cheese! Where were you brought up? I hope you'll never let Miss Amelia hear you use them words! She'd never like you again."

Sarah hung her head. These technicalities caused her to feel more homesick than ever; and, knowing her deplorable ignorance might be

further shown, she was silent until Judith asked whether Sam had grown much since he had visited his aunt four years ago.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" Sarah answered. "Sam is almost a man now, and so kind and good and thoughtful!"

Judith shook her head incredulously. She had a horror of boys of all ages, and she remembered that Sam had sent his aunt into a fit of hysterics by walking up the steps on a slushy day without the preparation required for such exercise. The steps had been rubbed with white sand, and the pavement in front carefully washed. He had big rubber boots on, and they were covered with vulgar mud. Aunt Amelia said, in her highest manner: "Go back, sir, and wipe your gums on the mat!" "Thank you, aunt," he answered, meekly; "I generally use a tooth-brush."

Sarah laughed on hearing of the incident. Judith looked at her with solemn disapprobation.

"But, Judith," Sarah said, "I know you would like Sam now. He's lovely. And he wants to know all that he can, and I want to help to send him to college. Dear old Sam! If I could only earn enough money, Judith! I'd do anything

honest. If I thought I could sing—which seems to be the only thing I could do, for I can't cook or sew well enough to be paid for it,—I'd go around with a hand-organ, like the Frenchman we saw the other day who sang the *Marseillaise.*"

"Miss Amelia would die. And what would the Hingginbothams say?"

"I can't help it. I'll do anything I can."

Judith looked into her face and saw that she meant it. Sarah was not at all pretty, but she had a very sweet expression in her face, which grew there because she always thought pleasantly and kindly of people. Judith was moved from two motives: one was fear that Sarah might disgrace the family by working, the other a desire to help the child.

"Do you think you could make tea for Miss Amelia while I make a little visit?"

Sarah hesitated. "I should like to try; Aunt Amelia thinks I'm so useless."

"Well, run home and try. Tell Miss Amelia I've gone to see a friend. There's nothing to make but the tea; the cold meat and currant-jelly are ready in the cupboard."

She flew off like a bird, her heart beating wildly from a sense of her new responsibility.

Aunt Amelia asked no questions after she had shown her surprise at Judith's unusual absence. After a time Judith came back and explained that she had seen an old friend. Before the aunt and niece separated for the night Sarah was reminded that she must conduct herself well before the Hingginbothams, and a coral necklace, from which depended a medallion of the Tory officer, was ceremoniously clasped about her neck.

"That necklace, if you bore yourself properly, would be the best possible introduction to the best families of this city," Aunt Amelia said, giving Sarah her bedroom candle.

Judith had seen the Hingginbothams in the meantime. They treated her like an old friend. She found them in their large, square parlor, which contained several mirrors in carved, gilded frames and a large alabaster urn. Mrs. Hingginbotham sat in the semi-gloom, with the "Life of Mistress Ann Fairbrother, *colporteuse* and preacher of the Faith," in her hand. She had a soft, pink-tinted face, and, though not exactly

Quaker-like in her garb, it was evident that she leaned towards the quiet colors of the Friends.

"Well, Judith," she said, cordially, "I am glad to see thee. And how did thee leave Miss Wharton?"

"Her constitution was never more salubrious," answered Judith, anxious to suit her language to the exalted social position of the Hingginbothams.

"That's good," said Mr. Hingginbotham, a ruddy, white-whiskered old gentleman, who had dropped his newspaper as Judith came in. "We're glad to see you, Judith! Will you have some tea?"

"No, thank you!" answered Judith, in an offended tone; "I've had my dinner, and will have tea when I get home. I needn't go outside of Miss Amelia's house to eat."

Mr. Hingginbotham laughed, and his wife reproved him with a look.

Judith needed no encouragement to begin her story about Sarah and Sam, and "all Miss Rosabel's family." The Hingginbothams knew she had come for her half-yearly gossip, and they enjoyed it as much as she did.

"Dear, dear," said Mrs. Hingginbotham, "we must really do something for the little girl! Miss Wharton knows so little about children, she'd never think of the right thing."

"Miss Amelia has no call to bother herself about other people's children," said Judith, with dignity.

"That's true," replied Mrs. Hingginbotham, soothingly; "but there is no reason why Sam should not go to college. Miss Wharton must have saved a great deal of money all these years. A word from you, John——"

"You're right, Martha, and I'll speak it!" said Mr. Hingginbotham. "Miss Wharton is not selfish, but she's hedged about by tradition and prejudice. And the little girl must be very nice to have melted Judith's heart; for I verily believe she hates all young people under twenty."

"I don't love 'em specially," said Judith; "they put things out of their place, and they're always eating between meals. But this is an honest, good little girl. She ain't pretty, but I'd be proud of her if she were my own chile, she's so pleasantly spoken. She sings like a nightingale."

"That's good," observed Mr. Higginbotham. "We'll hear her to-morrow night."

When Judith had gone Mrs. Hingginbotham said: "I am glad Judith has suggested our duty to us. It is rather hard on poor Rosabel that she should suffer because she married into no particular family."

"And Amelia has more money than she can spend too."

Unconscious of this conversation, Sarah went to her room that night, very sad at heart. The term of her visit was drawing to a close, yet she had accomplished nothing. The walls of her room seemed a prison, the great Chinese rose jar a threatening spectre. What could she do?—what could she do? She knelt by the bedside and prayed with all her heart, making a special prayer to St. Cecilia. And then she forgot her powerlessness and heart-sickness in sleep.

Monday was a day of preparation at Aunt Amelia's. She went to market—though she seldom went to market on Monday—in the hope of getting some very fresh vegetables fit for the exalted palates of the Hingginbothams. The old silver and bronze candelabra were burnished till

they glittered, and Judith was so cross that Sarah was actually afraid of her.

At last five o'clock came. Judith smiled behind a large white apron. Aunt Amelia appeared in her stiff black silk, with her hair distended on both sides by combs, and with her little pearl pin fastening a collar of point-lace as yellow as gold. Sarah wore her best white frock, with a pink sash, and the pink coral and medallion. She was as nervous as possible. How she wished the Hingginbothams would come and go!

Aunt Amelia was anxious too. She had made up her mind to do something for her relatives in the country; she had been moved to this resolution by the plainness of Sarah's clothes. But, as she announced both to Sarah and Judith, her decision would depend entirely on the manner in which Sarah impressed the Hingginbothams.

When the brougham of these great people drew up before the door poor Sarah's heart ceased to beat. After a while, when Mrs. Hingginbotham had come down-stairs, having smoothed her hair with the sacred brush, with

the carved ivory back as yellow as Aunt Amelia's old lace, Sarah began to understand that the Hingginbothams were human beings and very pleasant human beings, after all.

But who could describe the high tea that followed? Such a combination of delights as that repast is only possible in Philadelphia. Aunt Amelia looked at the table, and felt that it was worthy of persons who went habitually to the Assembly. Judith showed all her teeth as she brought in the oysters in a silver dish. It was a proud moment for her.

"I hope, dear Martha," Aunt Amelia began, when Mr. Hingginbotham had said grace, "that you can eat something. Our resources are so few! Don't be bashful, Sarah!"

Sarah's face was redder than her hair; she trembled all over in spite of a reassuring glance from Mr. Hingginbotham, who was at once attracted by the sweetness of her look.

"Pass the cream sauce, Sarah, please," Aunt Amelia said.

This cream sauce was a miracle of art. Aunt Amelia had invented it for escalloped oysters.

She was noted for it, and people in Philadelphia, of the best families only, spoke in admiration of Miss Wharton's cream sauce.

Sarah tremblingly lifted the silver dish—a pudding dish of George Washington's time—in which it was, and tried to give it to Mr. Hingginbotham.

"Help yourself," said Aunt Amelia, graciously, "and drown the oysters in it. I'm sure you'll like the flavor; they are quite insipid without it! *Do* help yourself! There's plenty outside in the kitchen."

Awful fears chased one another through Sarah's mind. The dish was hot, but she did not mind it. Oh, how could she ever pass it to Mr. Hingginbotham with Aunt Amelia's eyes on her! Suppose she should drop it!

"Help yourself——"

These gracious words froze on Aunt Amelia's lips. The catastrophe had occurred. Sarah had trembled a little too much, and the cream sauce was bubbling over Mrs. Hingginbotham's silk frock.

Sarah turned white. The table seemed to be whirling around her. And from the kitchen

door came Judith's sorrowful and sepulchral voice bearing the burning words,—

"There ain't no more!"

Aunt Amelia sat bolt upright, as she might have sat if she were a Philistine and Samson's temple were falling on her.

Mr. Hingginbotham smiled.

"I'm afraid I jogged the little girl's hand with my elbow," he said.

"Forgive Mr. Hingginbotham, dear," his wife pleaded, turning to Sarah; "he did not mean to be awkward."

"Oh, it's my fault!—it's my fault!" sobbed Sarah, diving at Mrs. Hingginbotham with her napkin. That lady gently avoided her, retired to the kitchen for a minute, and returned without the cream sauce.

Sarah's tears choked her; she did not want to live now; she wished she were far away in a deep forest, or buried in the hay in the old barn at home.

Mr. and Mrs. Hingginbotham did their best to enliven the meal, but Aunt Amelia would not assist them; and Judith's frequent sighs, which seemed to be emitted by a bellows, did not add gaiety to the occasion.

The party passed into the parlor,—the Hingginbothams wondering how they should spend the time until ten o'clock should strike.

Sarah sat on a slippery horsehair-covered chair, with her eyes cast down, and her fingers hopelessly interlaced.

Aunt Amelia said to herself that her niece was a disgrace to her. She'd never have another of Rosabel's children in the house; they could go their own way, for all she cared! She had never been so mortified in her life!

Conversation ebbed. Mr. Hingginbotham, looking kindly at Sarah, asked her if she would sing.

"I am sure you can," Mrs. Hingginbotham added. "I know by your face you can."

Sarah went up to the little tinkling piano, made at Dresden early in the eighteen hundreds, and, with a prayer for strength, touched the keys. She must do her best to regain her aunt's favor for Sam's sake. She tinkled out the prelude, missing a note—upon which she heard her aunt sigh,—and began the old song, fashionable in other days, "She Wore a Wreath of Roses."

Sarah's love and hope gave her strength, and

as she played the little interlude between the stanzas she asked St. Cecilia to remember her. Her pure, clear voice touched Aunt Amelia strangely, and Mr. Hingginbotham seemed again to hear his own mother, far up in New England, singing the old song in the twilight. Sarah sang it with all the quavers and grace notes of the past; for her mother had learned from Aunt Amelia, the eldest of a large family; and Aunt Amelia had lessons from the French *emigré* who had learned his trills from the music-master of Marie Antoinette herself.

Tears dimmed Mr. Hingginbotham's eyes, and Aunt Amelia turned her face to the wall. It was not the song itself or even Sarah's voice that produced this effect: it was the quaintness of her manner of singing,—a manner she had caught from her mother in the quiet hours in the farm-house.

"If it ain't Miss Rosabel's voice," said Judith, from the dining-room, "this ain't wash-day."

This emphatic statement went to Miss Amelia's heart.

"You ought to train Sarah's voice, Amelia; you can well afford it," remarked Mrs. Hinggin-

botham, striking while the iron was hot. "Her voice is very good."

"I endorse that opinion," said her husband.

"Oh, not me!" cried Sarah, turning on the piano-stool,—"not me! Send Sam to college, aunt,—do! He longs for it, he prays for it! And, if you are so kind, let me stay at home, and educate him! Oh, do, aunt!"

"If she doesn't talk like our Miss Rosabel I'm a clam!" said Judith, from the dining-room. "But I guess Miss Amelia's got enough for both."

And, under the influence of the song, which recalled other days, the approbation of the august Hingginbothams, and Judith's support, Aunt Amelia promised to educate both Sam and Sarah, and to see what could be done about the mortgage.

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After this Sarah sang and laughed and was happy. Aunt Amelia wondered at the change, and said to herself that her niece was growing more and more like Rosabel.

She kept her promise. The mortgage was

paid, and all the Magruders made happy by the lifting of the burden. Sam went off to a college chosen by his father, and Sarah to the Sisters' not far from Philadelphia. And after that Sarah always wrote her name Cecilia out in full.

"When Miss Amelia's gone," Judith said, "I'll just turn over and be a Catholic; for I'm convinced that some of the Romish people are good enough to go to heaven—or the Assembly!"

But St. Joseph's drew Judith to its sacred precincts many times, and long before Aunt Amelia died Judith made her First Communion in the solemn old church, and Sarah knelt at the altar rail with her.

XIV

THE GARRET

THE story telling was interrupted by other things for a time. Alice returning from New York, showed a very praiseworthy desire to do her best; and Uncle Will noticed it. He himself began to feel that he had done wrong in acting as if all the folk at Rosebrier were toys that could be made to move at his will.

Uncle Will wanted to be a priest. When he was a small boy he had wanted to be a priest; he had played at swinging the censer, and he had never been tired of making vestments from every piece of available material. As he grew older he became engrossed in business; after a time he was sent to China, and on his return he resolved to make a retreat in the Jesuit college, and to discover whether he had a vocation for the priesthood or not. Up to this time he had followed his own will; in managing the affairs of Mr. Watson's family he had followed his own will,

too. He had asked himself during the last few days whether he had not been led by a desire to *show* how well he could do things rather than by the unselfish wish to do them well. He asked himself, too, whether the Watsons would not get on just as well without him.

He had it an excuse for remaining in the world that Mr. Watson needed him. But he now saw that the management of a family must be as delicate as the management of the springs of a watch. He had brought Alice to Rosebrier, with a sense that whatever he did was sure to be right. He had brought Josie Harney, too. And what had resulted? Alice might at any time fatally trouble the peace of the family, and Josie was evidently in process of being spoiled. He sighed as he said this to himself, and made up his mind that he would make the retreat just as soon as Mrs. Watson's birthday had passed.

In the meantime the preparations for that great day had gone on. Rose, who could sing, chose a little French song, "Sur le Pont d'Avignon," for the opening chorus. The rehearsals had to be conducted in the barn. The picture in the book from which the song was

taken showed a number of small people, in three-cornered hats and funny, old-fashioned head-dresses, making their bows and courtesies according to the directions in the song.

Rose looked longingly at the costumes. "Dear me," she said to Alice, "I do wish we could get some pretty, old-fashioned dresses, and make a tableau just like the picture!"

"That's easy enough," answered Alice. "Hire the things you want. You can get anything you like in New York."

"But we can't afford it," said Richard. "I have spent all my allowance except one dollar, and that I must give on Sunday for the orphans."

On examination it turned out that the rest of the young people also had very little money.

"Spend what you have," said Alice, "and never mind the orphans."

The others were shocked.

"We always save some money for the collections at the church. It would be like stealing to spend it any other way."

Alice was astonished. "I never thought of such a thing,—never! I don't mind giving

things away when I don't want them, or when I feel like it,—I really don't."

"Mamma doesn't teach us that way," observed Rose, gently.

"Charity means that we shall give even if we sacrifice something for it," said Josie. "You are very wrong to give only when you feel like it."

Having said this, Josie looked about her for approbation. Alice blushed; Rose's quiet tone had made her feel that she was wrong; she did not like to be told so in plain words. She made no answer; and Josie continued, in that patronizing manner she had lately acquired:

"It is very nice of you, Alice, not to get angry at my well-meant words,—very nice. One should always keep one's temper."

Richard looked at Josie with a twinkle in his eye; he was tempted to laugh, but he restrained himself. Before Alice could answer Rose said:

"There is a great deal of old brocade and silk in the garret,—curtains and other things, half faded and, I am afraid, rather moth-eaten. I'll ask papa if we can use them."

And away she went towards the chrysanthe-

mum circle, where her father was taking his usual walk.

Mr. Watson laughed. "But you must be careful mother does not find it out."

"She can't," said Rose; "to-morrow she is going to spend the day at Elmwood. We can work like beavers."

"Well, then, no lessons," Mr. Watson answered. "Recreation to-morrow!"

This was good news, and Rose flew back to tell the boys.

Mrs. Watson wondered why everybody at home seemed so anxious to see her well out of the house. Never had she observed so much alacrity on the part of the members of her family in looking over time-tables, in packing her luncheon, in having Rosalind harnessed, and in watching the sky for any indication of a storm.

No sooner was she out of the house than the young people invaded the garret. Odds and ends, the accumulation of years, were pulled out of boxes, trunks and closets. A strange array they made. Rose secured the old gowns, some great fans, and many bunches of flowers made in France fifty years ago. Richard and

Bernard found long silk stockings, buckled shoes —the buckles the worse for rust,—plenty of gold lace, and several rapiers of the time of Queen Anne. Their other uncle, the artist, had left many queer old curiosities in the garret; and the young people concluded to have an entertainment which would match the costumes.

The dry, warm, hay-smelling loft of the barn became a scene of activity. The song, with appropriate dresses, was arranged. After this the play was the thing. Everybody looked to Bernard; he was expected to invent a play.

Probably he might have done better if he had not been bothered by such a multitude of suggestions. And then, everybody wanted the finest dress, which happened to be a blue velvet cloak and a hat with nodding white plumes.

Bernard's plan for a play was not received with approval. He suggested "The Roman Martyrs" as a title. "Alice," he began, "will be a Roman lady, and her name will be Flavia; she will be haughty and hateful."

"No, thank you!" said Alice. "I want something better than that. I want to be nice and pretty and wear that hat."

"Josie will be Flavia, then," said Bernard. "She will whip her slaves and ——"

Josie looked sulky. "I don't see why I can't be the martyr. Of course I don't really care, but the martyr ought to wear the cloak."

"Oh, no! That's for the emperor. I am to be the emperor."

"You are? I suppose I am to be a slave!" said Richard. "I'll not; make up your mind to that!"

"Then we'll have no play," replied Bernard; "at least no play of my making."

There was a pause. A fear stole into each heart. Suppose the birthday party should not come off? But everybody except Rose tried to seem quite indifferent.

"Oh, I'll be Flavia!" she said.

She was accepted with enthusiasm.

"Well," continued Bernard, "Flavia has a slave, whom we shall call Berenice. Berenice is a Christian. Flavia, you know, has a bad temper; she hits all the other slaves and sticks a long bodkin into them ——"

"I'd like to see anybody do that to *me!*" interrupted Alice."

"But Berenice was a Christian——"

"I'm a Christian," said Alice; "but I have my feelings as well as other people, and I will not be thrown about on the stage that way. I should like to be an empress or something like that. You know that I am the tallest."

"I will not try to make a play at all," said Bernard, trying to look dignified. "It would have been beautiful, too. I should have had a scene in the catacombs——"

"Where would you get the catacombs?" demanded Alice. "What are they, anyhow? Are they like honeycombs?" And she added an exasperating giggle.

Bernard took no notice of it. Alice, as a young lady, was a failure, he thought.

"Have you never read 'Fabiola'? The catacombs are places underneath Rome, where the early Christians hid. You must read 'Fabiola.'"

"Not 'Fabióla,'" said Josie; "but 'Fabíola.'"

"Very well," answered Rose, her color rising; she thought that Josie might have taken some other time to correct her. "Very well: 'Fabíola,' not 'Fabióla.'"

"Well, go on," said Richard. "Time passes."

"I will not go on," replied Bernard. "Everybody wants the best part."

"Why, of course," said Alice, coolly. "You can't expect us to be slaves."

"But there must be slaves in the play."

"Oh, you can change them into kings or something."

This was too much for Bernard. "I will write no play; you can do it yourselves. If it were not mother's birthday, I'd have nothing to do with the entertainment."

"If we don't have a play, what are we to do with the hat and feathers, then?" asked Alice. "Oh, do write something for the hat and feathers! If you'd let me wear the hat and feathers, I'd be a slave,—I really would!" And she laughed "friviously,"—this was the adverb Bernard used in his mind.

Bernard was obdurate.

Rose, good, womanly little soul, whose instinct found out the way to many things, did not join in the coaxing that followed. She knew a better way. When the rest had ceased to importune Bernard, who stood with his

hands behind his back à la Napoleon, enjoying his own importance, his little sister said:

"Bernard has written a lovely poem on the hyacinth. I saw the paper in his room. It's just lovely. Do read it, Bernard."

The boy's features relaxed. "It's nothing at all: only a trifle. I'm sorry you mentioned it. It's quite worthless."

"If it is quite worthless," said Josie, in her most virtuous way, "I wonder that you could think of reading it on your mother's birthday."

Bernard was disconcerted. "It is not so very bad," he answered. "Of course, it is not all that I could wish ——"

"Read it! Read it!" they all cried.

Bernard cleared his throat, and took a sheet of foolscap from his pocket. He solemnly stepped on a starch-box and began:

> "The hyacinth loves the light,
> As the butterfly loves the rose —"

Josie interrupted. "The butterfly doesn't love the rose. Our teacher of botany says that's a fable. We read all about it in class, out of a little French book about a voyage around a garden."

Tears came into Bernard's eyes. He jumped from the starch-box. "I don't care what your botany teacher says. The butterfly must love the rose in my poem."

"But it isn't true," persisted Josie.

There was a feeling in the assembly that Josie was too learned.

Bernard smiled to conceal his disgust; but it was the cold, ghastly smile of an outraged poet.

"I see that I am not needed," he said. "You can arrange your programme as you will."

He walked towards the ladder which led out of the loft. The young people clung to him. Josie alone refused to implore him.

"You know that the butterfly *does* love the rose!" exclaimed Alice. "Madame Régence has a beautiful pair of vases with butterflies and roses on them. Don't mind her, Bernard. Go on with the poem. It is lovely!"

"Oh, do read it!" pleaded Rose, with tears in her eyes. "Mamma will be so pleased!"

"Josie knows the butterfly ought to love the rose, and papa quoted something from Horace about rosa and papilio. I'm sure there's something in Ovid about papilio," put in Richard; and

everybody felt that Richard was just learned enough.

Bernard silently went back to the starch-box, and said slowly:

> "The hyacinth loves the light,
> As the butterfly loves the rose —'

He paused and looked at Josie. Josie tried to speak. "I don't care ——" she began.

But Alice covered her mouth with her hand, and the poet went on:

> "The hyacinth loves the light,
> As the butterfly loves the rose;
> And the violet fresh and bright
> Sweetens the wind that blows."

"Oh, how nice!" whispered Rose. "The hyacinth and the violet are mamma's flowers."

> "And the April clouds pass by,
> And the August days are hot;
> And when autumn's breezes sigh,
> These flowers are on the spot."

Josie could not endure this. She burst from Rose's grasp. "Hyacinths and violets do not bloom all the year!" she exclaimed. "I wouldn't tell such a big story even in a poem."

Bernard let himself fall on the box, and began to look red about the eyes. Josie was reproached on all sides.

"People say I always tell the truth," she said; "and I *will not* listen to such nonsense. I'll not play at all,—there now!" She sat down on a pile of hay, a picture of sulkiness.

Rose kissed Bernard softly. "Don't mind," she said; "Josie will get used to poetry by and by."

The bell rang for lunch, and the young folk obeyed its summons with unusual haste. The situation had become difficult.

XV

ROSE'S PART

JOSIE did not speak to anybody during lunch. Rose tried in vain to get a word from her; she was offended, and she determined to show it. Bernard soon forgot his annoyance. And after lunch the little group gathered on the porch—Josie going off alone.

Alice, who had become somewhat more amiable in her thoughts, was anxious to make amends for the offense she had given the boys on Friday night. She was curious, too, about their proceedings; and she determined to satisfy her curiosity.

"Why did you go into the box again on Sunday?" she asked of Richard. "I thought you confessed all your sins on Friday afternoon."

Richard changed color and hesitated. "You made me angry, and I was afraid to go to Holy Communion," he answered, in a low voice.

It was Alice's turn to be disconcerted. "I

never thought—but you were nasty and disagreeable to me; you know you were," she said.

Richard's eyes flashed. "Perhaps I was," he replied, after a pause. "I went back and told father,—and he scolded me a little; he said I need not have troubled about it, for I had not been wilfully angry; and then I felt comforted."

"He told me the same thing," interposed Bernard. "If I had thought for a moment, I should not have been impatient with you, Alice. And I was sorry I did not think in time."

Alice looked at the two boys thoughtfully. "You are both queer," she said; "but I think you are good. Dear me," she added, "I wish I were like Rose!"

"You mean like Josie," laughed Rose. "I am naughty sometimes, but Josie never is."

"Josie thinks too much of herself. I don't want that kind of goodness; I think too much of myself already."

Mr. Watson and Uncle Will came out of the study, with their cigars. Rose, anxious that no harm should befall the proposed entertainment, explained their difficulties to them.

Uncle Will asked Bernard for the poem, and

said it was very pretty. After that he asked leave to improve it. Bernard consented; and with help of Uncle Will's blue lead-pencil, it was made to read this way:

"Though the April clouds pass by,
And the flowers pass by, too,
Yet the fragrance of their sigh
Leaves a dream of sun and dew."

Bernard thought his own lines were better; but he accepted these thankfully, and went on in his own words:

"Dear mother, when our praise
Is only a memory sweet,
'Twill bring you back these days,
And make your fond heart beat."

Josie was sought out at once by the other four. She accepted the amendment very coldly; she knew she was right,—she refused to play, all the same.

"Why?"—this came in a chorus.

"Because."

"Because why?"

"I don't want to. I am not angry."

"But why will you not play?"

"Oh, because!"

Alice looked at the others. "I should like to knock her head against a rock!" she exclaimed.

"I know you would," answered Josie, bursting into tears. "I know that nobody loves me, and that I am an outcast. I want to go back to the convent."

"I'm sure that the Sisters would not let you spoil our birthday party," said Alice. "I like you well enough when you are not so aggravating."

Bernard, who was always on the lookout to find how words were used or misused, made a note in his mind to look for "aggravating" in the dictionary.

Rose laid her hand on Alice's arm. "What would mamma say if she heard you speak so rudely to Josie?"

Alice was silent. She won another victory over herself by taking Josie's hand. "Come," she said, "I didn't mean that. Let us talk about the play."

Josie permitted herself to be led back to the porch. She sighed several times, and made everybody uncomfortable by assuming a "hurt" look.

The young people went back in haste to the

barn to arrange their plans. Josie opened the meeting by saying that she was willing to take any part—anything was good enough for *her*. She was used to being trodden upon; she was only a poor orphan.

This aroused Alice. "You are only a half orphan. I'm the helpless creature, without father or mother, who is trodden down ——"

Richard laughed; and Alice, seeing the humor of her attitude as a martyr, laughed too.

On second thoughts Bernard refused to have the hat and feathers in his play at all. He had consulted Uncle Will and the authority had decreed that Romans of the time of Domitian did not wear hats and feathers. Consternation followed this decree.

"Why can't we dramatize something out of Froissart's 'Chronicles'?" demanded Richard. "I might be Gaston de Foix."

A protest followed this. Rose, as usual, came to the rescue. "We have the chorus," she said. "Josie can play a piece. Can't you, Josie?"

"Sister Evarista teaches me; but, then, you might not like my humble efforts," answered Josie, with a long sigh.

"Oh, yes, we shall!" said Rose, brightly. "We can find a two-part song for Dick and Alice. Bernard can play on his violin. Then I will sing; and after that Bernard can read his poem, which is *beautiful.* That will be part first. And then," continued Rose, her eyes sparkling as she saw the others were listening to her, "we can have tableaux from 'Fabiola': 'Pancratius and his Mother.' Bernard can be Pancratius, and Alice the mother, with the velvet cloak ——"

Alice nodded eagerly.

"Then we can have a tableau of St. Agnes, with a palm-branch in her hand, and Uncle Will's little stuffed dog wrapped in a lambskin rug at her feet. We'll have the lights low—only a strong light on St. Agnes. Josie can be the saint, and Dick can speak Tennyson's poem—mamma likes it, you know. We can have Dick as Columbus, too, with the hat and feathers; and Alice and Josie can be Indian queens: there's a lot of peacock feathers in the parlor ——"

Rose paused for breath. Enthusiasm prevailed. Josie smiled in her old pleasant way.

Sister Evarista would have been pleased with the expression on her face now, could she have seen her.

Bernard ran off and returned with "Fabiola." Richard assumed an attitude as Columbus, and Alice put on the velvet cloak.

"I don't understand how Rose arranged it all so nicely," exclaimed Josie.

"I do!" cried Alice; "I do—oh, you little dear, you didn't think of yourself at all! You have no part. That's the reason you pleased us all. You didn't think of yourself. Rose must have a part."

"I know what Rose will do at the end. She will be a flower girl, with a great basket of chrysanthemums and roses; and when Josie has played some pretty music, she will step down and give them to mamma."

This was Richard's proposition. It was well received.

"I have the best part," said Rose, smiling.

Rehearsals began at once. Josie secretly determined to astonish everybody. She went off to the parlor and chose the most difficult piece of music she could find—as dreadful for the un-

initiated to look at as the overture to *Semiremide.* The others followed her. While she banged away they went through their attitudes.

Richard with a false mustache, Alice in a long train, Bernard with a pasteboard helmet, and Rose acting an Indian queen in Josie's place, were hard at work, when there was a sound of carriage wheels. Could it be mother? If so, they would be discovered.

XVI

A BUNDLE OF LETTERS

(ALICE to Clara Hunt, at Madame Régence's school, Fifth Avenue, New York.)

Dearest Clara:—You can't imagine how I suffered when I first came here. There is no Huyler's confectionery within ten miles, and one doesn't see a new thing in style from one week to another. I know you will pitty me (I'm not sure whether pity has one *t* or two, so I write it both ways). I found the place quite too awfully dull, and two of the most disagreeable boys you ever saw. However, we made peace; and it is not so very bad, after all.

I sent you yesterday by express a lot of bologna sausage and two jars of pickels. Have a good time after madame is in bed, and think of me. Have all the girls in, except that hateful Ellie Snow, who, although her father is in the retail business, puts on such airs. You will find in the little drawer of my desk a pencil for

blackening your eyebrows, and "Wedded to a Villain," with a black cover on it. It looks like a book of common prayer. It is very nice to read in church.

To be frank, I begin to like this place. There is not much style about the people here. Rose Watson's dresses are made at home, and she never heard of Worth—what would madame say to that? But I like it. I always wanted a home, and the people at Rosebrier know how to make a home. I want to be good, too; but I don't know how. Madame Régence does not care for what goodness means here. They don't mind deportment so much, and they don't worry as much about having an English accent as Miss Worthington does. It is lovely for me not to be obliged to think whether I say "fancy" or "guess"; and I can call the "drawing-room" the parlor without being scolded. They don't bother about English things here.

But we have had a great disappointment. We had fixed—good gracious! if Miss Worthington knew I wrote "fixed" for "arranged"—to have a play on Mrs. Watson's birthday. Everything was almost ready, when Mrs. Watson came home

from the railroad station with her arm broken. She has just been taken up-stairs; and, being left alone, I took time to scribble off this letter. Send my comb with the silver repoussé work on it, and a box of oranges for poor, dear Mrs. Watson. I had a lovely part in a tableau—it is really too bad. The boy who carries the mail is here. Good-bye, old girl!

(An answer from Miss Clara Hunt.)

Dear Alice:—So glad to get your letter! Come out of that poky place as soon as you can. I was fifteen yesterday. We had a great day. A diamond cluster from papa and a pearl necklace from mamma. The whole school is *mad* with envy. Madame has a new carriage, with a mirror in the side; and a box for rouge and complexion-wash; was just too comfortably arranged for anything. And the cushions are scented with the most delicate violet. We go to the opera "Traviata" on Tuesday. I have found the novel you mentioned. How foolish for Amaryllis to refuse the Duke! I read the book yesterday morning until the sermon began, and then I had to assume that expression of intense interest which madame always insists on.

Do come back to school! I hear those Watsons have never been in society anywhere. You had better cut them as soon as your visit is over. I send you "Eoline; or, Love's Young Dream." It is too sweet for anything. Too bad the old woman broke her arm; you would have had a chance to make a sensation among the rustics. How I pitty (pitty has two t's?) your issolation (has isolation two s's?). The sausage you were kind enough to send is quite too awfully lovely. You are always so delicate and thoughtful in your attentions. Thank you, dear! Must dress for dinner and do the elegant!

(Note from Madame Régence to Alice.)

Let me ask you, ma chére, to turn your toes out as you go up and down-stairs, and not permit yourself to be excited. Bad temper is not good for the complexion. Mr. and Mrs. Watson are doubtless nice people; I should not otherwise have let you visit them. But do not be too *empressée.* You will never meet them in society; you had better be merely civil, and not burden yourself with acquaintances who are not quite of the best *ton.* Miss Worthington begs me to ask you to walk very straight, and to keep all Amer-

icanisms out of your speech. She particularly begs that you will not say "mad" when you mean "angry," or "fashionable" when you mean "smart." Nothing is fashionable any more; everything tout a fait à la mode is "smart." Go to church with your friends, and do not bend forward too much when you pray; the gently bending attitude—you remember you have been shown how to assume it by our dear Miss Worthington—is the smart thing just now. I embrace you with all the love of a mother.

EULALIE RÉGENCE

(de Gonçourt-Biron-Perigord de Pontet-Canet.)

P. S.—You might mention my name to Mrs. Watson—is not that her name?—and that I am of a noble family: my name shows that. Use your efforts, dear child, that I may secure another pupil to be formed as you have been. Again I embrace you.

(From Josie Harney to Sister Evarista.)

Dear Sister:—I begin my letter with my dictionary at my elbow, according to your instructions. I hope to spell every word correctly, because I know how anxious you are that I should. You ask me how I like Rosebrier.

Very much, indeed. Everybody is so kind. I really think, Sister, I like it better than the convent. I know how anxious you are that I should tell the truth on all occasions, and therefore I say this frankly. Everything is easy here; everybody loves me, except a very fashionable and frivolous girl named Alice Watson, whose bad temper and silliness are brought out more and more by the virtues you, dear Sister, have taught me to practice. I never felt so good before. At the convent there are so many rules, and one never feels better than anybody else. There is always somebody to remind one that one has faults. But here I do just as I please, and everybody praises me. How happy I feel! It is so easy to be good where there are no rules.

Dear Mrs. Watson has been hurt in a railway accident. She was brought from the station in a carriage just as we were rehearsing the birthday tableau. I had such a nice part. I am afraid there will be no party now. Everybody remarks that I have been so well brought up, and that I am so clever. You should see that girl from Madame Régence's school. Her manners are so affected! I am so glad that I am not like

her; indeed, Mr. Watson was so good as to say I am an example to his whole family. I shall do my best to convert Alice by showing her that simplicity is more beautiful than fashionableness, which I despise.

P. S.—Will you ask Sister Monica to send me my best shirtwaist? I think I shall puff out the sleeves, like those Alice wears. There is no harm in looking nice, and I always feel so much better when I have new clothes on.

(Sister Evarista to Josie Harney.)

Dear Josie:—I must write only a short letter, for fear that I should say too much. I send you "The Following of Christ," with some passages marked on the virtue of humility. Read them carefully every day during your stay at Rosebrier. It is never easy to be good, unless God makes it so; for the grace to be good comes only from Him. If I could talk to you I should ask you to remember that the key to all the virtues is humility. I imagine that you can find out, after you have said a little prayer, whether you have that great virtue or not.

Sister Monica sends the waist; but I must ask you not to puff the sleeves. At your age your

dress should be as simple as possible. Do you think it is quite fair to condemn Alice as frivolous and fashionable, and then to imitate her? Believe me, we never convert anybody until we have converted ourselves. If everybody praises you, beware; and if you act merely to gain everybody's praise, tremble. You are now undergoing your first experience outside of the convent school; you must make yourself strong by conquering yourself.

I notice with pain that you seem to think more of yourself than of this dear Mrs. Watson who has been so kind to you. If the play for her birthday was prepared to give *her* pleasure, you ought to regret its postponement more on her account than on yours.

(Extract from Josie's diary.)

October 25.

Sister Evarista wrote to me yesterday. Her letter makes me feel as if a cloud was over me. She has not one word of praise for me. Never mind, she will learn my true value some time. I was never understood at the convent. I'll just puff my sleeves, anyhow. Alice is so occupied with her appearance that she has no time to

think of poor Mrs. Watson. She is so cold-hearted.

(Uncle Will to the Rev. Thomas J. Brown, S. J.)

I wish that I could be with you early next month, to do my best to fulfil the vocation with which I believe God has blessed me. I hope with all my heart that I may be a good priest. I imagined that I was necessary to the family at Rosebrier; I see now that it was my will I was following—nothing else. The coming of two girls to Rosebrier has taught me a lesson. I have learned that it is better that I should not interfere with the family life of the Watsons. I might be, with the best intentions, like the clumsy man who ruins the delicate springs of a watch with his clumsy fingers. I find that, trusting in my own judgment, I have introduced elements into the Watson family which threaten to ruin its best qualities. In fact, I tried to do too much. I believe more firmly than ever that much must be left to God. Duty, not my will, forces me to stay in the world a little longer.

Mrs. Watson's health is improving.

(Richard Watson to his friend, Dominick Redmond, at college.)

My mother was hurt early last week on her way to see a friend. The train ran into an embankment, owing to the displacement of a rail, and her left arm was broken. Her coming home, white and faint, was a terrible shock to us all. We have offered prayers and Communions for her nearly every day since she has been ill. We had prepared a little entertainment for her birthday, but of course that must be given up now.

There are two girls staying here,—our cousins, Alice Watson,—we have lots of cousins,—and Josie Harney. Alice is almost a young lady. At first Josie was the better of the two; but of late she has become so conceited, that I like her less than the other, who is a monster of selfishness and bad temper. This comes of having people in one's house that one knows nothing about. I believe in exclusiveness; but all my people are entirely too democratic. Rose is different from other girls: she never finds fault with her brothers; but, then, she has always been with us, and that improves a girl so much. She thinks Bernard and I are perfection.

As soon as my father finishes his plan of

lessons, I shall join you at your school. I am very glad I did not go last term; I should not like to be away from home now that mother is sick. She is so patient through it all!

(From a letter written by Bernard Watson to Dominick Redmond at college.)

Life at Rosebrier is no longer what it was when you were here in the holidays. There are two awful girls here, and they are spoiling Rose. Rose, you remember, used to think that we boys were little gods on tin wheels. She does not seem to think so now. She thinks that we ought to listen to all the nonsense these girls talk, and say nothing. One of them was very disagreeable about a little poem I wrote for mother's birthday. She declared that the butterfly did not specially love the rose, and quoted some botany. The idea of girls learning botany! It will be frightful if they take it into their heads to contradict a fellow every time they think he is wrong. I've snubbed the girl ever since; but Rose will not have it; she actually dares to say that I am impolite and unkind. I know she does not mean it, because she must know that girls

are always more ignorant than boys, though girls have glibber tongues. I shall be very glad when these girls—they are abominably selfish and conceited—go away.

(Dominick Redmond to Richard Watson.)

Come to college. I have a sister at home who makes life a burden to me—always saying, "Take your feet off the sofa!" "Why don't you read more?" "Don't talk with your mouth full." I know what girls are,—they're no good. It is bad enough here; but if you are bossed, you are bossed by men, not girls.

(Rose Watson to Mrs. Esmond, in New York.)

Dear Auntie:—I have little time for writing. Mother needs a great deal of attention. I have just made a bunch of white chrysanthemums and mignonette for her room. I wish we had some hyacinths, she loves them so! I have made today a pillow filled with pine leaves, and waited on her as much as I could.

Alice and Josie are still with us. They both mean well; but the boys are dreadfully hard to manage. Boys are always stupid: they never learn anything unless it is pounded into them. I have to listen to the nonsense of these brothers

of mine until I am tired. It takes them *weeks* to pick up what a girl learns in a minute. They quarrel all the time with Josie and Alice. Josie knows twice as much as Dick and Bernard, and she *will* show it—I wish she wouldn't. Alice does not know as much as Josie, but she thinks she knows more. I almost wish that the time of their visit was up, they fight and argue so much.

Bernard wrote the *loveliest* poem the other day, about the butterfly and the rose. There did not seem to be much sense in it, but we can't expect to find that in poetry. I sometimes think boys—even when they are the best of brothers—ought to be caged up, and fed through the bars three times a day.

Poor, dear mamma lost her birthday party; but I ought to be too thankful to grumble, as she is better to-day—I shall finish this letter to-morrow. Father Oscott, of the church across the river, has sent for me. He wants me to go to see his little niece from Baltimore and to spend the day. Mamma says I must go, and the rest all declare that they will not neglect her.

Oh, dear, I wish I were as good and as clever as Josie Harney! She talks of her kindness

until one feels so bad, and she contradicts everything the boys say and quotes history to them. The other day she told Bernard that some poem he was reading is wrong,—that it was Balboa, not Cortez, that discovered the Mississippi. The boys were furious. . . .

I am back again from Father Oscott's. I must tell you about the terrible thing that happened yesterday. I wish I had not gone away!

XVII

A FIRE

THE dreadful event to which Rose alluded in her letter had been the result of Josie's disobedience and vanity. While Josie had kept close to the teaching of the Sisters, she had been liked by everybody at Rosebrier; but the moment she determined that she was entirely too good to be bound by rules, she began her downward career. At school the object of pleasing the Holy Child was always kept before the eyes of the girls. They were taught to ask themselves, "Would the Blessed Virgin like me to do this or that?" Josie, shortly after coming to Rosebrier, had adopted a new standard. This was: "How can I get the people around me to praise me more?" We have seen, from the bits of letters in the last chapter, what the result was.

Rose had gone reluctantly over to Father Oscott's, that she might help to make life pleasant for the little niece who was visiting him. She

had not wanted to leave her dear mother; but that gentle lady, who was much better and surrounded by willing hands, insisted that she should go. And so Rose went.

In the meantime Alice and Josie had been sulky. Alice was so greatly disappointed over the failure of the birthday party that she took to novel reading. She buried herself in the fortunes of that "Eoline," who was such a favorite in Madame Régence's school. She read some parts of it to Josie, while the two sat in the barn and mingled their tears over the downfall of their hopes. Josie had never heard anything like it. What a magnificent creature Eoline was! How bravely she defied her father and brothers in the scene in which she eloped with the young duke! Josie listened with flushed cheeks, and wished that she could be another Eoline.

Just as Alice had reached a most thrilling episode ("Eoline drew herself to her full height, and with her right hand pointing to the ambient light of sunset, and her left raised in a gesture of defiance towards her cruel parent: 'Disinherit me, monster, if you will; but——'")

Uncle Will was heard entering the barn. Alice threw the book into the hay, and pretended to be engaged in looking for eggs; Josie could do nothing except sit still and dream of the splendid Eoline.

Uncle Will called Josie to sew a button on his glove. Josie pouted.

"Let's come here again to-night, when they are all asleep," Alice whispered. "You can bring your waist, and I'll show you how to puff the sleeves. I'll provide the light."

Josie nodded and ran off. Her conscience was not at all easy. After all, she argued, the Sisters were too strict; think of the "lovely times" Alice had,—novels and boxes of candy, and puffed sleeves! And, then, the sisters did not put the girls on their honor, as Madame Régence did. A girl wouldn't do anything wrong if she were put on her honor. Now, at Mrs. Watson's there were no rules, nobody was suspicious, and how beautifully everything went! Josie forgot for the moment that she had just made an engagement to meet Alice in the barn and to connive at having a light there. A light in the barn was strictly forbidden.

Alice went through the house with an air of mystery. She forgot for a while her disappointment about the party. Even the sight of Mrs. Watson's pale face among the pillows did not make her feel that she was planning an ungrateful act. Josie took up the tray on which was Mrs. Watson's dinner without a word; she felt ashamed to look at the kind, gentle woman, who greeted her so sweetly. The evening seemed very long to Alice and Josie. Richard and Bernard went up-stairs to talk to their mother after dinner. Alice and Josie did not go; Uncle Will taught them how to cut Japanese chrysanthemums from tissue-paper,—an art he had acquired during a trip to the land of the Mikado. They were not interested. Josie's heart sank at times, as she reflected how wicked she was. Alice had no such qualms. At ten o'clock Richard and Bernard came down to say good-night. Mr. Watson and Uncle Will went to bed, Alice and Josie to their rooms, and the house was quiet.

Then Alice came to knock at Josie's door very softly. The girls met in the hall, Alice carrying a candle, covered with Bernard's cap. She had the novel under her arm. Josie followed her,

trembling, with her best waist thrown over her shoulder, and her hands filled with sewing materials. They went through Mr. Watson's study to the garden—it was easy to unbolt his door,—and as they crossed the grass the soft scent of the mignonette came to Josie like a reproach.

"O Alice," she said, "let us turn back! I don't think we ought to go out here."

Alice frowned. "Don't be silly!" she whispered. "We'll have a good time, and nobody will be the wiser,—nobody! Come on. I've my pocket full of oranges and cookies. Don't be foolish!"

Josie felt that she would give the world to be back again in her room; she was more ashamed of herself than she had ever been, but she had not the courage to say so and to turn back. They entered the barn and ascended the ladder to the loft. Alice took a large apron and hung it in front of the little window facing the house.

"It's all right now," she said; "nobody will guess that we are here." And she took the cap from the candle. The light was dim and the shadows in the large loft were gruesome. Josie remembered that she had not said her prayers.

But she could not say them now: she shivered. Alice had no such scruples; she emptied the oranges and cakes from her pocket, and, sitting on the floor, she continued the history of Eoline. Josie was not interested now; every time the wind beat against the window she looked around her in affright. A mouse ran under the hay, and she almost screamed. She tried to fix her mind on the reading and on the puffed sleeves, but it was useless. Alice went on, munching a cake at intervals:

"Eoline never looked so entrancingly beautiful; her eyes, with dashes of emerald light in them, helped to make a toot ensembel (I mean 'toot ongsembl'—don't you call it that, Josie?) which electrified the crowd of notables, the elight (or is it 'aleet'?) of the most aristocratic county of England. She entered the room with an air of no—(Alice spelled 'b-l-e-double s-e'—what would madame call that, I wonder?—'o-b-l-i-g-é.' Oh, yes! 'knobless obligey') which astonished the most unobservant. A lurid light shone——"

"What's that?" asked Josie, in a startled voice.

"Oh, I don't know what 'lurid' is! You are

not expected to understand every word you see in a novel ——"

"What's that?" repeated Josie, not heeding her.

"What's what?"

"Oh, listen!"

Alice was silent. There was a rustling in the room beneath. They heard a gruff voice say, "This is cozy enough, Jim."

Josie started up, but too terrified to scream. They were in darkness: in her terror she had overturned the candle. A moment of complete stillness followed. They could hear the crows among the stubble in the corn-field, disturbed in some way, cawing grimly.

"Tramps!" Alice whispered. Both girls remembered that they had left the barn door open. They clung together; but, even in fright, Josie did not lose her grip on her precious red waist.

"Let's go up and see the loft," said the gruff voice again. "Come on, Jim."

The girls did not speak. They were not aware whether they walked or ran. All they knew was that they passed through the darkness, through the scent of the mignonette, and found themselves

in Mr. Watson's study. After that they crept up to their rooms.

Once in her room, Josie began to realize how ungrateful she had been. She had been put "on her honor": there had been no rules; and how had she acted? She was thankful that Mrs. Watson had not found her out. This was her first thought. She smoothed out the red waist by the light of the candle in her room, and prepared for bed, putting off to the last moment the act of saying her prayers. Suddenly she became aware that there was an unusual commotion in the house. She heard Mrs. Watson scream; then followed exclamations from the boys; after that she made out Uncle Will's words, as he passed her room: "The barn is on fire!"

She could not move. She sat on the side of the bed, pale and faint. The candle! the candle! It was her work. She felt a hand on her shoulder. Alice, wrapped in a large shawl, was beside her.

"The barn is blazing," she said; "you can see it from my window."

"O Alice," Josie cried, "we shall be found out!"

"Nonsense! I'll not tell."

"And the loss?"

"Nothing at all," answered Alice. "I'll make my guardian give them a new barn. We'll just blame it on the tramps."

"Oh, I wish we could, but we can't! It would be wrong."

"Wrong or not," Alice said, with an ugly look on her face, "we've got to get out of it."

Josie threw herself on the bed and sobbed. "I wish I had never gone to the barn! Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

The blaze could now be seen from Josie's window, and a loud crackling was heard.

"We'd better go out and look innocent, at any rate," said Alice. "We didn't mean to do it."

Alice had no such scruples. Her thoughts were occupied with the danger into which she had fallen.

The two girls went down to the porch, where Mr. Watson was, wrapped in a great ulster.

"Brownie and Rosalind are safe, children," he said; "the stable has not caught fire yet, and Richard has the horses in the corn-field. One of you had better run up-stairs and tell mamma. She'll be glad to hear it."

Alice hung back; she did not care to face Mrs. Watson. Josie, fearful of some questioning, ran up-stairs. Mrs. Watson's room was in half darkness. The barn was not on her side of the house, and the glow of the fire did not reach it. A shaded lamp relieved the darkness. Josie entered softly.

"Mrs. Watson!"

A low answer was heard. Josie could not make out what she said.

"Josie, is it you? Oh, I have been so frightened! I heard somebody call suddenly that there was a fire, and then I must have fainted. Sit down, dear."

Josie obeyed her.

"I am so glad to see you! You seem to take the place of Rose."

The girl said nothing; the words seemed to cut her heart.

"I heard two steps pass my door to-night, and, feeling restless, I went to the window. I saw two figures moving towards the barn with a light. I was almost sure that it was the boys. And—oh, it breaks my heart to say it—they denied it a little while ago!"

"I am sure they would not go into the barn with a light," said Josie, eagerly.

"Who was it, then?"

Josie felt the blood rush to her head, and her heart stopped beating. "I don't know," she gasped. And as she said it she thought of Sister Evarista, and the room seemed to sway unsteadily.

"Ah," sighed Mrs. Watson, "I wish I knew it was not Richard and Bernard! The fire doesn't trouble me at all. But I fear with all my heart that they have told me a—a—lie."

"Oh, no! They would not do that!"

"But," Mrs. Watson insisted, "who could have gone out? Somebody went out, I heard steps. I saw a light half-covered; I heard steps returning. Who could have gone out? You and Alice did not go, did you?"

"They—they were tramps," stammered Josie.

"Tramps!" said Mrs. Watson. "There could be no tramps in this house."

"They were in the barn."

"I see, Josie," said Mrs. Watson, her voice becoming clearer with excitement, "that with your usual goodness you are trying to excuse the boys."

Josie began to cry. Mrs. Watson, with a

perversity of which she was incapable when well, went on lamenting the conduct of the boys. It was torture for Josie to listen. She dared not pray. If she prayed she feared that she might be tempted to tell the truth; and if she told the truth Alice would call her a coward, and the people at Rosebrier would no longer look on her as a model. Oh, if the night were only over. She could see that Mrs. Watson was ill; she excused herself by thinking that in the morning Mrs. Watson would forget her accusation against Richard and Bernard.

"I forgot to say that the horses have been saved," added Josie.

"Have they?" asked Mrs. Watson indifferently. "I would give the world if I could only be sure that my boys told me the truth."

There was silence. Surely Josie's Guardian Angel must have veiled his face; now was her time to tell the truth, and yet she did not speak.

"But what could the boys have been doing in the barn?"

Josie burst into loud sobs.

"I'll say no more, Josie dear, since it troubles you so."

XVIII

A VICTORY

THE glow of the fire faded away. The contents of the barn burned easily, and the flames soon devoured all within their sweep. The boys went into the house, washed their begrimed faces, and stole quietly up to their mother's room. Richard knocked gently. Their mother, still holding Josie's hand, said softly: "Come in!"

The boys entered. Richard went up to the bed to kiss his mother's cheek; she turned her face away abruptly. Richard drew back, his own face flushing red. Bernard approached.

"Go away—both of you!" Mrs. Watson said, in a voice very unlike her usual gentle tones.

"What have we done, mother?"

"You have told me that you were not in the barn to-night before the fire."

"Yes," answered Richard, in surprise, "I told you that, mother."

"But you were."

Richard said nothing. Bernard stepped forward and put his arm through his brother's. "We have never told you a lie, mother."

"No—no—not until to-night."

Tears filled Bernard's eyes; Richard stood, pale and silent. Bernard turned his face towards Josie, and she fancied that he appealed to her.

"O Mrs. Watson," she said, sobbing, "I'm sure it was tramps,—I know it was tramps!"

Bernard looked at her gratefully. Richard turned his eyes away coldly.

"Somebody upset a candle in the hay," said Richard; "we found that out. But it was not Bernard or I."

"Who was it, then? The girls?—you cannot expect me to believe that they went to the barn to-night. Your father? Uncle Will?"

"O mother," Bernard cried, kneeling by her bed, "you hurt us! Dear mother," he continued, taking the hand Josie had held, "believe us. We would die this minute rather than tell you an untruth."

Mrs. Watson pushed his hands away. She turned her face to the wall. "It is sad that the

only being here I can trust is almost a stranger. Josie, tell my sons to go."

Bernard stood up, but lingered. Richard walked to the door.

"Do not come back," their mother said, "until you can tell me the truth."

The world looked very gloomy at that moment for Richard and Bernard. But to them it was bright compared with the aspect it wore for Josie. She envied them as they left the room. She opened her lips: they seemed hard and dry. No, she would not—she could not destroy all the affection and respect the folk at Rosebrier had for her by a single stroke. Oh, if she had never listened to Alice Watson! Oh, if she had never come to Rosebrier! Oh, if she had told the truth before Richard and Bernard entered the room! The only thing for her to do was to tell the truth to Mrs. Watson at once; but every time she hesitated it grew harder to speak. She knew well that the golden chain that bound the mother and sons together would be severed unless she spoke. But she dared not speak.

In the meantime Mrs. Watson lay with her face to the wall, her head throbbing and her

heart bursting. She felt that life could never be the same to her, no matter what might happen. Her boys had told her a falsehood. She knew they had gone into the barn with a candle earlier in the night—she had seen them with her own eyes,—and yet they denied it. If Mrs. Watson had been in her usual health she would not have been so ready to doubt her boys. She was worn out from pain; she had not slept well for many nights; sickness had made her for a time querulous and suspicious and anxious.

Richard, walking to the end of the passage, looked out of the small window at the smouldering barn. Bernard stood near him, absorbed in the bitterness of the moment.

"I think I ought to tell you, Ber, old boy," Richard said, turning, with an affected air of carelessness, "that I know who upset the candle."

Bernard looked at him in astonishment.

"Yes, I know. Alice and Josie were in the barn. Mother saw *them*, not us."

"Impossible!" answered Bernard.

"But I saw them go out through the door of papa's study; I thought they were making some

pleasant surprise for mother. But I couldn't tell on them, you know."

"I would!" said Bernard, hastily.

"No, it is too late now. Besides, they are girls. It would be mean."

Bernard made no answer for a moment. According to his code, it *would* be mean. Then he said: "Josie will tell herself; she is a good girl."

"We shall see. When she could hear mother say what she said to-night without speaking out, she'll hold her tongue, I fancy."

Bernard sighed. "Mother will never be the same, Richard."

"Never!" repeated the other, with a sigh that sounded like a sob.

"I think we ought to tell," Bernard said, after a pause; "life will be so wretched."

"I will never tell. I should despise myself if I told on two girls."

"And when father hears it?"

Richard winced. "Don't let us speak of it. Come, go to bed."

The prayers sent up that night by those two boys were fervent and full of trust and entreaty.

Josie did not pray. Alice came to her room, and the two girls sat together until very late. Alice was almost jubilant. It served Richard right to be suspected. He was too proud and disagreeable. Now he would be less insolent. Alice declared she was never happier in her life. Those hateful boys were in her power.

"Don't you go and tell!" she said, earnestly. "I'll give you my blue tea-gown."

Josie hung her head.

"You are going to tell!"

"Oh, I don't know! I don't know! I wish I could! I wish I could!"

"Nonsense!" said Alice. "Let the boys bear the blame. It will be forgotten in a few days and we can't suffer."

"It is not right,—oh, I *must* tell!"

"If you tell," cried Alice, "I'll make your life a burden. I'll ——"

"My life is a burden now. I don't care whether I live or die. But what will they think of us when they find us out?"

Alice did not reply at once. She looked into Josie's face. "I'd die before I'd tell. You can have my bangle bracelet if ——"

Josie shook her head. "The Sisters would not let me wear it, anyhow. I don't care for bangle bracelets any more."

Alice reflected. What else might she offer? What else would have an attraction for Josie?

"There is no use in offering me anything," Josie said. "I shall have to tell. If I don't tell I can't be a Catholic any longer."

Alice was aghast. "You *can't?*"

"I must go to confession; and when I tell what I've done the priest will say I must acknowledge it."

"Don't go to confession for a long time!" said Alice. "That's what I'll do."

"It is a sin to put the blame on the boys; it is a sin to lie; and if I should die before morning ——" Josie covered her face with her hands. "But I will not tell—I will not tell!"

"That's right," said Alice. And she looked thoughtful.

Josie left the room. But thoughts pursued her; what would become of her if she died that night? In her heart she knew that it was wrong to make Richard and Bernard suffer for what she had done. It never occurred to her

that she would be punished for it anyway. In her room, with the light of dawn slowly breaking through the window, she thought about it.

After all, sin must be a dreadful thing, if people were punished so that Josie was afraid she might be punished that very night. In the darkness just turning to gray, Josie felt a thrill of fear. The statue of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Child shone whitely through the gray light. She saw the face of the child plainly.

"I'll tell," she said,—"I'll tell you, if you'll only keep me from dying before I do it." A figure softly came behind her, gliding from the doorway,—"I've thought it over," whispered Alice. "Let's be brave,—and tell!"

Josie fell asleep in the chair, much relieved.

* * * * * *

The next day, as soon as Mrs. Watson had her breakfast, Josie and Alice went into her room and told their sin. Mrs. Watson had no words of reproof for them; she was so happy and so sorry, both at once, that she could only kiss them, weeping. Richard and Bernard were called in, and the cloud floated away from them.

"Let me stay with you," Alice implored. "I

will learn to be good. And, though I am an orphan, my relatives have made me so rich that I can give you everything you want, if you let me stay."

Mrs. Watson shook her head, smiling. "You are too rich to live with us. We are not wealthy; your ways are different from our ways. If you lived here you would have to be poor as we are."

"I would do it!" said Alice, passionately. "I will give Father Oscott—the priest Rose likes so much—all my money. Oh, just let me live with you! If nobody loves me, what is money to me? I want to be loved just as Rose is loved."

Rose came in at this moment, and Alice appealed to her.

"I *know* I am careless, "Alice said; "but I can be good if I see good examples."

Rose joined her entreaties to those of Alice. Josie did not speak; she was thanking God that she had told the truth.

Alice was not satisfied. She had begun to love the simplicity of the life at Rosebrier. Here was refinement without fashion, elegance without luxury. The gospel of wealth was not

taught here. In Washington, she had begun to learn that money was important. At Madame Régence's money was all that counted; money was loved; it surrounded every action and mingled with every thought. But at Rosebrier Alice felt she would, if she deserved it, be loved for herself alone.

"If I were poor," she sighed, "Mrs. Watson would take me in! As I am rich, I must never expect to have a real home. I wish old Mrs. Williams hadn't made me her heiress;—she fixed it all with Uncle Will the other day. It is too bad! Nice people will have nothing to do with me, for fear other people will think they are after my money; and people who are not nice want my money, not me. O Josie," she said, with tears in her eyes, "you are happy! You're a poor orphan, and people love you for yourself; but I am supposed to be rich, and I've met nobody, except my cousins, who do not think of my money first. I'm an outcast—that's all!"

Alice wiped the tears from her eyes and went to her room, angry with herself and the world. Josie, in her room, knelt, saying over and over again the act of contrition.

Early the next morning Alice arose. She had taken a resolution. She wrapped herself in a warm gown and sat down to write a letter. She had thought about it in waking intervals of the night.

"Dear Father Oscott," she wrote, "Little Rose has often told me of the poverty of your people; and so I came to the conclusion to relieve it. You know a relative left a great many thousand dollars for me. Will you take the money—every cent of it? Just give him this note and he will let you have it, because it is mine to do as I please with."

Alice folded the note, and sealed it carefully with an anchor seal her mother had given to her. And after lunch she went up to Mrs. Watson's room and kissed her.

"You will have to take care of me now," she said. "I am poor; I have nowhere else to go. I have given everything to Father Oscott."

Mrs. Watson, looking at her, reflected on the opposing qualities in Alice's nature; and it dawned upon her that, if the good were helped against the bad, Alice might some day be a good

Christian woman, not a frivolous creature. With a triumphant expression on her face, she told Mrs. Watson the story of her gift to Father Oscott.

Mrs. Watson smiled. "How old and how young you are, Alice! Uncle Will, your guardian, will not give the money to Father Oscott—it is not yours yet; and dear Father Oscott would not take it, if it were yours to give."

"You will not have me, then!" cried Alice, throwing herself down beside the bed.

"Perhaps—yes, after you have gone to the Sisters a while, you can come here."

Alice kissed her and stole out of the room, too happy for words.

She went to her room, and sat silent for a time. Somehow the old days she had lived on Capitol Hill seemed to be with her again. She looked out at the patch of blue sky between the waving oaks, and the face of her mother,—smiling,—seemed to gaze at her. And on her dressing-table was a letter from her old playmate, Belinda! She opened it, and her eyes brightened. It was full of cheerfulness and kindness and hope,—the kind of letter which Belinda always wrote to her friends.

Down-stairs, there was a consultation among the three elders. Uncle Will had announced that he should have to go to Sault Sainte Marie, in order to complete some railway business in which he was interested.

"I shall leave Alice with the Esmonds for a time, and ——" he hesitated.

The Esmonds were distantly related to the Watsons. Mrs. Watson had a great respect for Mrs. Esmond. In fact, she loved her as if she were her sister.

"That will be very good for Susan!" exclaimed Mrs. Watson. "And delightful for Alice, who can finish her school work under Mary's sensible direction."

"And," continued Uncle Will, "I want to take Richard with me. He needs a change. He has been too much in this narrow circle. Everything has been made too easy for him."

Mrs. Watson started. Mr. Watson shook his head.

"I shall be away six months, and then, God willing, I shall go to Woodstock."

"But how could Richard *live* in a city?" asked Mrs. Watson, who, being a sensible woman,

had begun to see that Richard needed competition with boys of his own age. "At the same time, I'm sure Susan Esmond will take good care of him!"

"It will take me some time to finish my business on the Lakes, and I can give Richard and Ferdinand Esmond three months of camping in the most delightful climate in the world. That will correct the confinement of New York. I'll take Alice and him to New York on Saturday."

Mr. Watson was silent.

"This will break up our circle," Mrs. Watson said, with a sigh, "but I suppose it is impossible, in the interest of children, to keep them always at home."

"Home is best," said Mr. Watson. "To stay at home is the best," he added, quoting his favorite poet, Longfellow. "I see what Will means. Richard needs a little more frost in the air he breathes. Well, mother, what do you say?"

"Will's a good judge," she said.

"Not always," said Uncle Will, with a laugh. "You know *that;* but I think I am right *this* time."

"I'm afraid you are;—but let the boy get up to your lakes as soon as possible. Remember he is a country boy!" said Mr. Watson. "We shall keep Josie, of course."

"Oh, yes, poor dear!" Mrs. Watson said. "I love the child!"

And so it was arranged. Alice was settled with the Esmonds, and entered as a day scholar at the convent of the Dominicans, and Richard became a student at Mr. Dixon's school, and time passed until the adventures of Richard began.

XIX

THE ADVENTURES OF RICHARD WATSON

After Richard Watson had been in New York a few months he was anxious to get out of school. He was tired of it. He had become less studious than at Rosebrier, and fonder of outdoor sports. He sighed when he thought that two years must pass before he could be free to earn money for himself. He often said that he did not see the use of bending over books from morning to night. A bright boy, he added, could make his way in the world whether he had education or not. His father and uncle were of a different opinion, however, and consequently Richard was kept at school. The unhappy fellow grumbled and groaned, and spent valuable time in repining instead of study.

His cousin, Ferdinand Esmond—popularly known as "Ferd,"—was a hard worker at school. Richard, who was now tired of books, called him a "bookworm," and announced to everybody

that he was no good at baseball. This was not altogether true. Ferd could not catch or pitch as Richard could, but he was agile and active enough. Ferd made his studies the principal work of his day, while Richard made baseball the principal work of his. The latter dreamed of baseball, thought of nothing but baseball, and was impatient to get out of school that he might take his place in a celebrated baseball "team" and begin traveling around the world, after he had spent some time at Rosebrier.

Ferd and Richard were good friends. They had disputes at times, but, as a rule, they managed to get on pretty well. About the middle of the vacation time Richard began to grow weary of New York. He had read all the books he liked—which were mostly thrilling tales of Indian fights,—and he had just finished "Reddy the Pitcher; or, The Umpire's Revenge." He had spent every cent he could scrape together in attending baseball matches. On this particular occasion life did not seem worth living. The two cousins then were third cousins,—were sitting in the back yard of Mr. Esmond's house.

Ferd's head was, as usual, bent over a book, which had a brown cover. Ferd was not quite as tall as Richard; both were about the same age. Ferd was lighter in color, stouter than Richard, with not quite as much muscle, but with a very healthy look. Both boys were considerably tanned, for they had been much in the sun.

"Well, I'm tired!" said Richard, with a yawn, throwing down the book. "There's no ball game this afternoon, and if there were I've no money. All the fellows of our own club happen to be out of town to-day. Oh,"—and here he nearly dislocated his jaws with another yawn,—"oh, I wish something would turn up!"

Ferd was silent.

"Drop that stupid book, Ferd," he continued, "and talk! What would you do if you had money?"

"I don't know," said Ferd, absorbed in his book.

"Oh, yes you do." Richard went to look over his shoulder. "What! Not 'Jules Verne' or 'The Boat Club,' but geology, as I live! Well, Ferd Esmond, you *are* a fool! What use will geology ever be to you? What's the use of any

study, but especially these ologies? Come, let's talk. Dad Dixon will make you swallow enough geology when school opens. You needn't bother your head with it now."

"Don't bother me!" said Ferd, absent-mindedly. Then he put his finger between the pages and looked across at Richard's yawning face. "I give only an hour and a half to study every day during vacation, you know, Richard. The time is nearly up, and I'll be free for the day. But I promised Mr. Dixon I'd pull up in geology; you know I was backward in it last term. Let me alone for ten minutes."

During the ten minutes Richard yawned and threw stones at a cat on the fence.

"Now!" said Ferd, closing the book. "What were you saying?"

"I was saying that schools are humbugs, and that I'd like to be out in the world making money. I'd go to-morrow if father would let me. If I had enough cash I'd have a good time. I'd see all the games I liked; I'd make presents to all the New York nine, and I'd travel around with them, taking a bat occasionally just to let people know I was in the swim."

How had Richard changed!

"I don't think you'd do that," said Ferd; "or if you did you'd get tired of it, if you are any good at all."

"No, I should not."

"Yes, you would. What good would you be? How do you think your father and mother would like it, after they had taken the trouble to send you to school and all that ——"

"I don't want to go to school. I know enough already. I wish I was back in the country,—at Rosebrier."

Ferd looked at Richard in surprise. There was a twinkle in Richard's eye, but Ferd saw that he was more than half in earnest.

"Do you see them—I mean *those*—muscles?" Richard asked, jumping up from the hammock in which he had been lounging, and rolling up his sleeves. "Those are the muscles of a young Hercules or a Corbett. With them I'd hew my way through the world!"

Ferd laughed. "You would? But if you want to earn money in the world, Richard, you'll find, as Mr. Dixon says, that brains count more than muscle. The man we saw carrying a hod

the other day had bigger muscles than yours, yet he will probably carry a hod all his days."

"Why doesn't he go in for slugging, then? Look at me!" Richard put himself into a prize-fighting position, and bounced at Ferd.

"Because, if he is an honest man, he'd rather carry a hod than be a brute."

"Well, I'm not going to argue. I'd just like to know what you're going to do when you earn money."

"I know very well," said Ferd. "I'll pay your uncle back—you know how kind he has been about mother's mortgage and my schooling, —and then I'll build a house for mother and try to make the best of myself."

"I'd rather go to school than do that. You're too slow for me. I'll go to the wild, untenanted woods, and find a gold mine, or something of that kind. 'In the hands of men entirely gr-r-r-r-reat, the pick is mightier than the sword.' Oh, I wish we had something to do!"

"I'm going to walk up to Central Park and find some specimens for Alice. You know she has to have twenty-five botanical specimens before she can go in for the botany class at her

school. Come along. I'll do anything for Alice, —she's just like a sister to me!"

"Hear him, ye gods!" cried Richard, who was given to theatricals at times. "He asks me to follow his footsteps whither I shall not see even a lion, a tiger, a bear, a wolf, on which to try mine glittering sword! Naught but the peaceful policeman shall you meet. No: adventure I must have. Bring forth the living flesh of lions that I may feed thereon. Ah-a-ha! I thirst for gore! But stop!—is it not the letter-carrier we see approaching? See! he tosses a missive between the rails of yon fence. And 'tis for me!"

Richard caught the letter which the good-natured postman tossed to him; he opened it, and uttered a shout as he read it and took from it a piece of thin blue paper.

"It's from Uncle Will! Hurrah!"

Richard danced a fantastic figure and stood on his head. All this was very foolish; for he not only kept Ferd waiting impatiently, but he ran the risk of tearing the piece of blue paper, which was very important.

"Well, what does he want?" asked Ferd, try-

ing to catch Richard's feet, which were performing various antics in the air.

Richard turned himself into his usual position, and, having gained his breath, answered: "I don't know what he says yet; but I know he has sent a check for a hundred dollars."

Fred, open-eyed in wonder, approached the check and examined it respectfully. Then they both read the letter, which was from Marquette in Michigan, on Lake Superior.

"Dear Boys:—I enclose some money to be equally divided between you. You can spend it in paying a visit to me. I am camping out near Marquette, among the pines. I have plenty of fishing lines, breech-loaders, and a rifle or two. Bring some warm, old clothes. You can take the boat from Buffalo. Of course this invitation must be shown to your parents, who have already half consented."

It was signed, "William Watson."

"Uncle Will is an—an angel!" cried Richard.

Ferd's face flushed with pleasure, but he said nothing. Would his mother let him go? This was the question that filled his mind. He was sure that if she saw Uncle Will's letter she would

not. The mention of rifles and breech-loaders would fill her with terror. And yet the prospect seemed so pleasant. Ferd had never been away from home before. He had read about the delights of camping out, and here was a chance of enjoying them.

Richard ran into the house with the note.

"Richard needs to learn that he doesn't know everything, and that he can't do everything by mere force; and Ferd deserves a holiday," Uncle Will had written to Mrs. Esmond.

After which Ferd's mother consented, though with a sinking heart; for he was all she had in the world.

The boys were called in and informed of the decision. Ferd kissed his mother, and Richard danced a fandango.

"I know that I can trust you," said Mrs. Esmond. "I need only remind you that you are to go to mass whenever you can, Sunday or week-day; and you are *not* to smoke cigarettes. You may start to-morrow for Buffalo on the night train."

The boys were presented by Richard's father with a complete outfit for hunting and fishing.

Afterwards they regretted this; for they found they could have traveled more easily unencumbered, and their fellow-travelers told them that they could have bought or hired an outfit cheaply at Marquette.

They enjoyed the ride from Chicago. They found great pleasure in watching three canary-birds, which the captain said had followed his steamer during all the year. They fluttered particularly around a hanging-basket of plants in the stern of the *Jay Gould.* During most of the voyage through the lakes the steamer kept out of sight of the shore, and the boys had nothing to do but sit in the stern, talking or reading. Some of the other passengers were very friendly, and one of them had been a mighty hunter in his time. He told bear and deer stories until the boys' mouths watered; and his descriptions of his prowess among the speckled trout were enticing. Richard and Ferd longed to be on shore with their rods and guns.

The Island of Mackinaw, with its many beauties and historical associations, was reached in the night. The boys stayed up until after midnight to see their fellow-passengers disembark.

They hoped that the steamer might have to take on board a great deal of freight, so that its departure might be delayed, until daylight; but the captain said he would stop at Mackinaw only half an hour. They overcame their disappointment by reflecting that they would at least see the town of Sault Sainte Marie by daylight. The boat hands called this city "The Soo," and Ferd in vain tried to show them how much more beautiful its real name is; and he said to Richard how pleasant it was to be brought near to those early times, when the name of the Blessed Virgin blossomed everywhere, like a lily-plant, in the footsteps of the missionaries.

When the passengers bound for Marquette had gone, the boys stood on deck watching the ominous clouds overhead. Every now and then a flash of lightning seemed to cleave the sky from east to west. The lake grew rougher, until the steamer seemed to be a mere toy tossed in giant hands.

Richard and Ferd who had the utmost confidence in the boat and the captain, rather enjoyed the scene. After a time the rain fell literally in torrents, and the noise sounded like the clash of

weapons. The boys went into the saloon, where a number of the passengers were assembled. Among these was a Canadian woman with several children. She seemed so terrified, as she stood listening to the thunderous noises around her, that Ferd longed to tell her that there was not so much danger as there seemed to be. He tried to speak to her; but she could not answer him, as she spoke no English. The children cried piteously; both Richard and Ferd felt sorry for them. The steamer rocked and bounded on the waves. The distress of the woman and children became piteous. Ferd suddenly thought of something. As the woman spoke French, no doubt she was a Catholic. Richard drew out his rosary. The woman's eyes brightened, and she and the children and the boys made a little devotional group,—Richard saying the rosary in English, and the woman and the children answering in French.

XX

A TALK ON HISTORY

THE next morning Richard seemed rather ashamed of Ferd's "piousness," as he called it; it was all very well when one was at home. The day had dawned as if there had never been a storm in the world. Richard swung in the hammock at the stern of the boat, and Ferd stood near him, watching the canary-birds that were playing hide-and-seek in the swinging baskets.

"You may say what you please," Ferd said, "but I am no more ashamed of saying my prayers than I am of eating my breakfast. One's as necessary as the other. I made up my mind long ago that it's mean to be ashamed of doing anything that it's a fellow's duty to do. When I went to the public school in Orange, the boys used to make fun of me when I'd stand up in class and tell the teacher that the history book we had was full of lies. I am not sorry for it.

And I'm glad I took out the beads last night and said the rosary. And I don't care whether anybody laughed or not."

"Well, you needn't get angry. I was only thinking how funny it would seem to the fellows at school."

"You need not trouble yourself about the fellows at school. If they'll mind their business, I'll mind mine." And Ferd walked to the rail with great dignity.

Richard chuckled. He made several other attempts to exasperate his cousin, but Ferd was obstinately silent. In a short time one of the waiters came around and gathered up all the chairs. By this sign the boys knew that breakfast was almost ready. The prospect made them feel more friendly, and when breakfast was announced they had become entirely amiable.

After breakfast the boys took their station in the front of the boat. There was a stiff breeze blowing. A group of passengers had gathered in the bow, holding their hats on, and enjoying the rush of the wind. Richard found a novel, and lost himself in it at once.

Among the passengers was a young man from a Western college. He wore eye-glasses, a striped tweed suit, and carried a magazine under his arm. Occasionally, too, he drew from a bag slung by his side a large field-glass.

"I didn't know you were a Catholic," he said, approaching Richard, "until last night. I have been anxious to talk with some intelligent Catholics on historical subjects. I am much interested in an article on the Spanish *Armada* in this magazine. It seems to be rather one-sided. It has a good deal in it about the cruelties of the Spaniards to English travelers during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Travelers in Spain were, I understand, treated with the utmost rigor, and submitted to horrible tortures simply because they were Protestants. I wish you would explain how Catholics justify that."

Richard turned red, lifted his eyes from his book, and shifted uneasily in his chair. Ferd held his hat, and did not seem to notice what was going on. Richard looked up into the serious face of the young man, who was evidently only a few years older than himself..

"Oh, I suppose it was mostly lies!" Richard

stammered. "I went through the history once, but I don't remember much about it."

The young man seemed disappointed. "I beg pardon," he said; "but I thought there might be another side to the matter. At our college we hear only the very modern view presented. Perhaps your friend ——"

Richard muttered to himself: "Stupid prig! I'll turn him over to Ferd."

A gentleman, an elderly man, who plainly had a habit of frank speech, glanced at Richard's novel—"Blue Eyed Dick; or, The Rancher's Revenge,"—and said:

"I don't think a boy who reads that kind of books can be expected to know much history."

Richard left his seat and went over to the rail, his ears tingling. For the moment he felt himself to be an utter failure.

"Perhaps *you* can answer this young man," said the elderly gentleman to Ferd.

It was Ferd's turn to blush. "I understand," he said, with some diffidence,—"I understand that the question is whether Catholics justify the cruelties which King Philip of Spain perpetrated

on English sailors and travelers in his dominions before the *Armada* set sail for England?"

"Exactly," answered the young man, whose name was Henry Roughton.

"I don't pretend to know much history," continued Ferd, "and I can't speak for all Catholics; but I think I can say that Catholics do not defend every act of Philip of Spain. If I were a Spaniard, I should say that most of the English travelers who suffered in Spain from cruelties in vogue in all countries at that time were either pirates or spies."

"Pirates!" exclaimed the young man.

"Of course," said Ferd. "You know as well as I do that Queen Elizabeth patronized and encouraged piracy. Hawkins was a pirate; the sons of Lord Cobham were atrocious pirates. They called themselves devout Protestants, and did battle with Spaniards 'whenever their efforts were likely to be repaid with plunder.'"

"But Queen Elizabeth punished these pirates."

"No, she didn't. She encouraged them. Thomas Cobham, a great pet of the Queen's, boarded a Spanish vessel, and sewed up the captain himself and the crew in their own sails and

flung them into the ocean. This was in time of peace; so you see the Spaniards had some reason for reprisals, though I don't defend their cruelties."

"But," said the young man, who had listened attentively, "the English Protestants were not so cruel. There is no record in history of such tortures as Spanish Catholics applied to English Protestants."

"But when the English were pirates, murdering in the name of Christianity, there was *some* excuse. Besides, I read only the other day the story of a venerable priest, eighty-three years old, who was slowly crushed to death with horrible tortures by order of good Queen Bess's government."

The young man made no answer. The old gentleman smiled, thanked Ferd for his information, and remarked that he hoped he would continue to "keep up" his interest in history.

Henry Roughton did not again refer to the subject. He and Ferd, for whom he seemed to have a great respect, fell into a pleasant conversation on the prospects of catching lake and speckled trout when they should reach Marquette.

Richard kept out of the way. He was angry with himself and everybody else. He threw his novel overboard—waiting, however, until he had finished it,—and said to himself that school studies were of some use on certain occasions.

XXI

PRESQUE ISLE

THE steamer, cutting the crystal waters of Lake Superior with a gentle and almost noiseless motion, approached the great ore docks of Marquette on a clear morning. Richard and Ferd thought they had never seen any place so beautiful. Presque Isle—which seemed to them a round-topped island, and which is, as its name implies, almost an island, towered before them. It seemed like a huge bouquet at a distance. Pines and spruce and cedar, of the richest green, intermingled with birch; and, showing below them, patches of rich, reddish soil were reflected in the pellucid waters of the lake. On the other side was the majestic Mount Mésnard, named for the great missionary. It also was clothed in the darkest green from its base to its round top. The city of Marquette, lately refreshed by rain, seemed so clean and bright that the boys were delighted with the sight of it. The air was laden

with spicy odors, and was as clear as the waters of the lake.

The boys made the proper speeches of good-bye to their fellow-passengers. Henry Roughton was especially pleasant to Ferd. He said he was going to camp out in the woods, and that no doubt he should see the boys again.

Richard and Ferd gathered up such of their equipments as they could carry, and hired a boy to take the rest to the nearest hotel. Here they were informed that their uncle had a shooting-box about fifteen miles from the city. He had left a letter for them, giving a map of the country, with their route traced out, and minute instructions on almost every point. They could reach him either by land or water.

The boys, having rowed very seldom, and then in a flat-bottomed boat on the Harlem River, were enthusiastic oarsmen. They decided in favor of the boat. Accordingly they hired a neatly painted craft, with the legend "La Fleur de Mai" written in red on a white flag which floated from her bow. The half-breed rented her to them for a month for five dollars. He told them that he had a big birch canoe, which they

might have for seven dollars. When he showed it to them, the boys were charmed by its light, springy motion, and Ferd remembered the lines about the canoe in Longfellow's "Hiawatha":

> "Like a yellow leaf in autumn,
> Like a yellow water-lily."

But the boys saw at once that they could not manage this fragile boat, although the half-breed tried to explain all its secrets to them in his broken French.

About half-past two o'clock in the afternoon, after a comfortable dinner, the boys started in *La Fleur de Mai.*

"She's as pretty as any May-flower!" cried Richard with delight, as they passed Presque Isle and cut out into the lake.

The little flag caught the sunlight in its folds. The oars sounded merrily as they rose and fell—Ferd holding the tiller,—and the boys aglow with pleasant anticipation. They were delighted as they saw the caves, floored by white, water-washed pebbles, which are visible on the beach of Presque Isle. It seemed like a page out of a story-book to behold veritable caves, in which piratical treasure might be—but was not—hidden.

An hour went by,—an hour of pure delight for both boys. The woods, the air of wildness about the land they skirted, the sweet, healthy smell of the pine and spruce, the soft motion of the boat, and, above all, a new sense of freedom made them feel as if the dream of a lifetime had been realized.

Richard yielded the oars to Ferd, who thought he saw a deer among the trees, and reached for his rifle;—but the antlers of the deer turned out to be two crooked branches. The boys were so greatly interested in the supposed deer that they did not notice the dark cloud which had gradually overspread the sky.

XXII

THE DEER

"RAIN!" cried Ferd, as a big drop fell on the back of one of his hands. The lake began to be troubled, and *La Fleur de Mai* swayed to and fro like a leaf in the wind. It was heavily laden with all their paraphernalia. A dash of water over the side of the boat made the boys think that they had better make for the shore, which they did, Ferd rowing with all his might. As their keel grated on the pebbly beach, the storm broke. They dragged the boat as far ashore as they could, tied the rope to a pine which bent in the blast, and rushed to the shelter of a big oak. The boat was well covered by a thick growth of spruce. If the rain did not fall too heavily, the provisions and powder would be safe. The boys had hardly time to crouch in shelter when the wind broke forth like a mad thing.

Richard and Ferd listened to the rush of the rain, almost aghast at its violence. The water

literally tore down. So thick was the foliage above them that hardly a drop touched them. The smooth leaves of the winter-green carpeting the ground shed an occasional shower of drops with a gay and unconcerned air.

Did you ever notice how bright and jolly the winter-green is? It defies all weathers; neither the sun nor the snow can change the lustre of its smile. It is hard to say when it is prettiest. Some people admire it most when its blossoms, shaped like those of the lily of the valley, peep out; others when the red berries gleam like the light of a warm fire in winter. The boys, crouching there in the darkness, with the roar of the storm in their ears, felt a kind of friendship for the glossy leaves, that seemed to mind all the turmoil so little.

The lake threw hundreds of white capped waves on the beach, and the boys began to fear that *La Fleur de Mai* and all their treasures had broken loose and were floating afar. They could not see the boat: it was hidden from their sight by the straight downpour.

Ferd felt something close to his hand,—something soft and warm. He closed his fingers and

found that he was grasping a chipmunk. The little fellow did not attempt to get away; he had crept close to Ferd in his fear. Ferd was pleased. Richard looked with astonishment at the quivering little animal.

"You're a queer fellow, Ferd! Animals seem to go to you as if they knew you."

"They know I like them," said Ferd. "That must be the reason."

Gradually the noise of the rain lessened; the thunder died away almost tremulously; the sun burst out; a rainbow spread itself across the lake. The boys saw their boat on the beach, safe, and they yelled "Hurrah!" The chipmunk concluded it was time for him to disappear, and he left the shelter of Ferd's arm. The boys laughed at the funny way with which he took his departure. Richard picked up a stone, but Ferd held his wrist.

"No, no!" he said. "Let the little chap enjoy the sunshine."

The boys found the contents of the boat uninjured. Though they had been sheltered by the trees, they felt damp, and Richard suggested that a fire would be a good thing. An axe, wielded

by Richard, soon secured them all the dry wood they needed. At the edge of the lake there was a large rock, from which the rain had flowed as it fell; its top was comparatively dry, and the boys had no difficulty in lighting a fire. They were not exactly hungry, but Richard thought they could "stand" a roasted sweet-potato or two and a toasted sausage. A few links of sausage were soon produced from beneath the tarpaulin and toasted on a pointed stick. The boys ate their sausage and sweet-potatoes as if they had not tasted food for a week. The warmth of the fire chased away all unpleasant dampness. The lake sparkled peacefully, and they were considering the necessity of embarking when they heard a rustling. Ferd turned to the spot from which it seemed to come.

"Look!" he whispered,—"look!"

Richard turned his head. Just at the edge of the lake, under an arch made by two birch trees, stood a deer. His head and forefeet were visible among the tall ferns. He had probably scented the intruders in his sylvan retreat. His antlered head was raised high, and his eyes had a peculiarly intelligent and alert look. He was such a

noble-looking stag that Ferd could not forbear a slight utterance of delight. The stag started and disappeared, leaving the ferns all a-tremble.

Richard seized his rifle and followed as softly as he could. Ferd hesitated, looked to the fastening of the boat—which was no longer aground, but balancing on the gently moving lake,—and then carefully went after Richard. Richard was determined to bring down the deer if he could. He did not know that it was against the law to shoot deer so early in the summer. Ferd had some regrets when he understood his cousin's intent. What was the use of killing a magnificent animal, which they did not need for sustenance? But, then, there was such an excitement in running after this superb creature through the cedar and ferns!

The stag, unaware that he was pursued, stood for a moment looking into the cedar swamp. Richard raised his rifle to his shoulder, but before he could pull the trigger the stag plunged into the brush. Richard turned away, bitterly disappointed.

"I'm rather glad he escaped," said Ferd. "What could we have done with him?"

"Glad! It's just like you!"

The boys saw that they had gone farther from the lake than they imagined. They found their own trail easily. Ferd lingered behind Richard, attracted by the beauty of the ferns. Richard hurried forward, disappointed and a little sulky. He was out of sight when Ferd reached a clump of fern, even more graceful than any he had yet seen. His steps disturbed a brood of young partridges, and he called Richard to turn back and take a look at the birds.

Richard returned his call in a tone that surprised him. What could be the matter? He forgot all about the partridges in an instant. He ran rapidly towards the beach. Richard came to meet him, his face very white and changed.

"What's the matter?" asked Ferd.

"The boat's gone!"

"Impossible!" responded Ferd, breathlessly. "Who could have taken it?"

"I don't know," said Richard, helplessly; "it's gone!"

The boys went in silence to the water's edge. Sure enough, the boat was gone. Richard and Ferd looked at each other hopelessly. What

could it mean? The rope had not parted in the storm, although the waves had rolled far up on the beach. Had some thief—Ferd's first thought was of Indians.

Richard picked up the end of the rope that lay on the ground. It had not been cut with steel, but the keener stroke of fire had sundered it. *La Fleur de Mai* had floated idly with the motion of the lake, and drawn the rope across the fire. Wet as the rope was, it soon broke asunder in the flame.

"Why didn't we think of it?" cried Richard.

As he spoke he saw the boat gliding fast into the lake, out of reach of the swiftest swimmer. The boys stood watching it, and the shades of twilight began to fall.

"What can we do?" Richard asked a hundred times. Ferd said nothing. He measured the distance with his eyes. He could swim a little; Richard could not swim at all. The oars lay useless on the pebbly beach. The fire, warm and comfortable, crackled away, unmindful of the mischief it had done.

"There's nothing to be done, that I can see," said Ferd. "We'll have to make the best of it."

"Make the best of it!" cried Richard, losing his temper. "Make the best of staying here, lost among these pines! I wish you wouldn't talk nonsense!"

Ferd made no answer. When Richard lost his temper, he found it best to be silent. Richard threw himself down beside the fire. Ferd continued to watch the boat. It was drifting slowly. Ferd noticed for the first time a small island directly in its way. He hoped, without knowing exactly why, that *La Fleur de Mai* might find this island an obstacle to further progress. No —the boat was passing the clump of bushes. He turned away with a sigh, only to see the next instant that it had stopped, probably entangled in some long creepers.

"Look!" cried Ferd.

Richard raised his head. "Look at what?" he demanded, sulkily.

"The boat has stopped."

"Well, what of it?"

"Can you think of any way of reaching it?" said Ferd.

"I'm not a fool," retorted Richard, "to waste my time! It's lost,—that's all about it. We'll

starve here, and never be heard of again. I wish we'd never come!"

Ferd's eyes were fixed on the boat. "We *must* find some means of getting it; but I confess I can't think of any. There's no way out,—what shall we do?"

"Oh, yes!" said Richard, contemptuously. "It's just like you!"

Ferd looked him in the eyes. "See here, Richard! Who's losing time—you, sulking by the fire and giving up all hope, or I, trying to find, through the only means in our power, a way out of this scrape? We've been taught to ask Our Lady to help us in difficulties, especially in difficulties from which there seems to be no escape. We've been taught this every day of our lives. We either believe in it or we don't believe in it. *I* believe in it, and I'm not afraid to show it. If there is any means of getting that boat, I'm going to get at it."

Ferd knelt down among the ferns. Having finished his prayers, he rose and put fresh wood on the fire. He tore away a huge mass of creepers, and chose several stout runners from them. These he stripped of their leaves. He was very

lightly dressed, having on the inevitable flannel shirt of the camper-out, and a pair of trousers to match it. He tied the oars together with the creepers, threw them into the lake, jumped after them, rested his chin on them, and struck out. Richard watched him in amazement.

"Good-bye! I think I've found a way of getting the boat."

Ferd was not much of a swimmer. The oars supported his weight, and he was enabled to propel them slowly in the direction of the entangled boat. The current was in his favor; but the water of Lake Superior is so cold that he felt a chill after he had made a few yards. He kept on bravely. Richard watched him, with his heart in his mouth. He could not endure the suspense of the sight. He, too, turned to his prayers, fixing his eyes on the black dot and the circle of ripples and splashing water which neared the boat.

Ferd felt a chill, colder and colder; he was within ten yards of *La Fleur de Mai.* Richard saw him throw up his arm with a cry. He strained his eyes. There was no trace of Ferd. The oars were floating past the little island.

XXIII

DANGER

RICHARD saw Ferd come to the surface again, scramble into the boat, and stretch out for the oars. In vain. Then night descended, and Richard felt that he was indeed alone. He called out. Ferd tried to answer. Richard called again. No answer came back.

Richard forgot the terrors of his own position in wondering what had happened to his cousin. He yelled with all his might. An echo repeated his cry. Richard, in all his life, never felt so lonely as at that moment. All the world was dark, not only with the darkness of night, but with the darkness of despondency. He called out until he was hoarse and could call no longer. At last he turned aside from the lake, and threw more wood on the fire.

The night was unusually gloomy. The storm-clouds were passing over the sky before a swift wind. A mist hid the lake from view. No star

was visible. The fire was the only pleasant thing in all the landscape. He shivered and crouched near it.

Richard had not hitherto looked on Ferd with much respect. He had liked him, but he never could get rid of a feeling that he was Ferd's superior. And yet in any emergency Ferd had always been the hopeful one. Richard could play baseball, smoke cigarettes, and Ferd could not; he knew more about the current novels and he read the newspapers more closely than Ferd; he was more popular with the boys of the neighborhood than his cousin,—all these things had made him feel that he was the better of the two. He had often imagined himself saving Ferd's life in a shipwreck or a battle, and his own picture of his bravery and Ferd's gratitude had almost drawn tears to his eyes. But now he was unhappy without Ferd. Ferd had done his best to save them by using his little knowledge of the art of swimming, and Richard saw how well he had used it. He had used it too well, in fact, Richard said to himself, because he was now lost—drowned, no doubt, in the icy lake.

The air grew warmer, and the moon came in

sight. Richard said his prayers with more simple devotion than for many a day, and lay down close by the fire. He felt more hopeful after this, but he still asked himself why God had doomed him to be lost,—why should he be alone when so many happy people were enjoying themselves in pleasant occupations? The boys at home were doubtless about to start for their evening bicycle ride along the Hudson; his uncle was probably waiting somewhere for them very comfortably; and Ferd was—Richard did not dare to speak the word even to himself; and he was alone in darkness among the pines. Why was he there? For what good? Asking these questions, he fell asleep.

Perhaps it was the fresh smell of the pine and the spruce, perhaps it was the purity of the air, that caused Richard to awaken the next morning exhilarated in body and mind. He could see the little island now, but not the boat. *La Fleur de Mai* was no longer in sight. This gave him hope; it might be that Ferd had floated away in it. Richard's first thought was of his cousin. This was one of the few mornings in his lifetime on which he had thought of anybody but himself,

or of any occupations except his own. If he could only feel that Ferd was safe he would not care for anything else. Richard's first night in the pines had begun to teach him unselfishness.

It was a glorious morning, almost startlingly brilliant. Richard went to work to replenish his fire. Then came the question of food. He peered about him, hoping that he might see a deer. But none appeared. No wild turkeys crossed his path, not even squirrels. There were bushes full of wild berries, but he was afraid to eat them. Marking the spot well, he turned into the woods, becoming more hungry at every step. Fortunately, he came to a large space filled with serrated leaves, and among these leaves were red berries. He stooped to examine them; he could hardly believe the testimony of his eyes. They were strawberries, ruddy and ripe! Richard was astonished to see them so late in the season; he did not then know that on Lake Superior fruit and vegetables are quite a month behind other parts of the country in growth. He thought he had never tasted such sweet berries in his life.

A clear stream ran across his path. He could see the pebbles five feet below its surface, and

the speckled trout gliding over them. He thrust in his hand in the hope of catching one of these elusive fish; but it swept, undisturbed and graceful, far beyond his reach. While he was engaged in this occupation he heard a rustling near him, and a stag broke through the brush in hot haste. Richard raised his rifle, but the stag was too fast for him. Close after it was a dark animal,—a dog perhaps. Richard had just time to fire, his sympathies all in favor of the deer. The animal bounded back and rolled over with a snarl. It was a wolf. Richard picked up a big stone and finished it. Then he hid himself in the cedar and waited patiently for the return of the stag. But the stag did not come. He examined the body of the wolf, but found no consolation; for he had never heard of anybody's eating a wolf—though he was hungry enough to eat anything. Unripe pigeon berries and green raspberries grew around him. He found them as enticing as the wolf's flesh.

He wandered along the bank of the stream, keeping his eyes open for game. A whir reached his ears. He looked across the stream and saw a covey of partridges. He could not ford it, so he

took aim as best he could, bringing down one of the birds. He threw aside his gun impatiently and waded into the stream. In his excitement he had not considered how deceptive these clear streams are,—how shallow they look, but how deep they are. It was a hard struggle; he almost lost his footing; but at last he reached the opposite bank, dripping from head to foot, and secured the partridge. He forgot his discomfort in the pleasure of having killed such a plump bird.

A splash aroused him from his triumph. He looked up just in time to see his rifle disappear under water. He had laid it on the edge of the bank, on a piece of rotten wood; the wood had broken under its weight, and rifle and powder flask had gone. This was a great shock to Richard. He took the partridge and hid it carefully among the leaves. Entering the water, he tried to find the rifle. After almost drowning himself, he got it. He could not find the flask, and he had no powder. The rifle was useless. Disconsolate and uncomfortable, he walked back to the lake. The sun began to dry his clothes. He kept up hope by thinking that at least he could cook the partridge.

As he came in sight of the lake, he thought he heard the whistle of a locomotive coming from the opposite direction. It sounded again. Forgetting all about the fire and the partridge, he turned and walked back towards the sound. Two hours of steady walking tired him. He was still in a dense wood. He would have given all the flowers that ever grew—and many grew beneath his feet—for a glimpse of railroad ties. He sank down, wearied. There was no thought of cooking the partridge now; for there was no fire, and no way of making one. He thought of using his watch crystal as a sun-glass, but he found that he had broken it. He crept into a hollow log. When he opened his eyes again it was night. He could hear the peculiar, whistling noise made by a stag. Of what use was it? He had no powder; the woods might swarm with deer and wild turkeys, but he must starve.

A more thrilling sound was the distant bay of wolves. This kept him awake. He was very thankful when the day dawned, though the day brought him little hope. He rose, said his prayers, and went on, hoping to find the railroad. Squirrels crossed his path; occasionally a

partridge whirred past him; but he found no more strawberries, and he dared not eat the other strange fruit. About noon he gave up nearly all hope. He would lie down and die; and so he lay down, with the soft air blowing against his cheek and the glossy leaves of the winter-green touching him.

And then Ferd's words came to him, and he thought of them, though his head ached and he found it hard to think at all. They were the words Ferd had said about prayer. Surely, while God and His Holy Mother looked on him there was some hope. It must be true that she, the Mother of the Blessed Saviour, had more influence with Him than he, a poor, careless boy, whose prayers were so unworthy. He said the *Memorare*, slowly and devoutly. Then he rose and tottered onward.

He had walked for about half an hour when his foot struck something hard. It was a turnip. He picked it up, peeled it with his pocket-knife and ate it. Somebody must have planted that turnip. He saw that he was in a little cleared space, and that turnips and parsnips grew around him; and in a clump of creepers was a little hut.

He made for it. The door gave way at his touch. The hut was unoccupied; a glance showed him a stove, a rude couch, a barrel, a tin box, and a glass filled with matches. He knelt on the threshold. His mother had not forgotten him.

Investigation brought to light a good quantity of flour in the barrel and some tea in the tin box. No discoverer of a gold mine was ever happier than Richard. He made a rude cake, with water from the well at the back of the hut. And, before a blazing fire, he enjoyed a repast of cake and tea, which a few days ago he would have despised.

His whole mind was bent on Ferd's fate. About sunset he sat near the stove, with his head in his hands, when a shadow darkened the door. He looked up suddenly and beheld Ferd! The boys were speechless. At last Richard said:

"Well, old fellow!"

Tears came to Ferd's eyes. After a while he told his story. He had sunk under water, cramped and powerless. But as he arose again he caught the boat and hung to it until he was able to climb in. The shock of his descent had

loosed *La Fleur de Mai* from the entangling creepers, and it had floated away. All night the boat had been at the mercy of the wind and waves. Ferd, protected by the tarpaulin, had been warm enough, but very anxious. Finally, caught by the tide, the boat had been carried against the neck of land on which Richard was.

All night the boys worked with their knives to make a pair of oars. In the morning these rude substitutes were ready. At dawn they paddled away, and in the afternoon landed on one of the beautiful beaches of Presque Isle. There they met a friend of their uncle, and told their story. He took them back to the hotel at Marquette, made them rest for a day, and invited them to accompany him in his steam yacht to their uncle's camping place. Of course they accepted this invitation.

"Ferd," said Richard, "you were right. Prayer means something."

"I know it," answered Ferd. "I should have died that night on the lake if I had not said the dear old rosary prayers over and over."

* * * * * *

During his miserable nights among the pines,

Richard had wondered why such suffering had been sent to him. Later, when his adventures in the woods, and the days spent in camp with his uncle, and the pleasant rambles on Presque Isle, had become memoirs, he began to understand that his experience had made a great change in him. He had always been too selfishly independent; when his wishes were fulfilled, he had cared little for those of others. He had not imagined that anybody was necessary to him. He had been accustomed to look down on other people. Now he began to understand how small he was; how dependent on God and his neighbor. Talking this over with Ferd, the latter said: "Why, even Robinson Crusoe, who knew how to take care of himself, had to have poor Friday!"

Richard learned, too, to have a greater respect for study. He had sneered at what he called Ferd's devotion to useless books. He recalled his doubts about the berries when he was almost starving. If he had known something of botany he would not have had those doubts.

Another incident occurred which made Richard feel that his teachers knew more than he did,—and he had formerly grave doubts of that.

While the boys were in their uncle's camp, Ferd had found many interesting specimens of ore, mostly iron and copper. But one day he came to the log hut in which they lived with a piece of quartz. He showed it to Richard, his eyes sparkling. Richard took it carelessly in his hand, and was about to throw it at a robin, when Ferd grasped it.

"It's gold!" he said.

Richard laughed. "Geology again! What's the use of bothering your head with lessons out here?"

Ferd took the quartz to his uncle. Richard was surprised to see the two go off hastily into the woods. The result of Ferd's keeping his lessons in his head was that a gold mine was discovered about a quarter of a mile from the camp, on the uncle's land. It was not a great gold mine, and it would take much money to work it; however, it enabled Ferd's uncle to give him enough money out of the proceeds of the sale to buy a little house for his mother.

Ferd and Richard were better friends than ever, because their friendship was founded on mutual respect.

Richard went home, to find that his father was not so well, and that the doctors had ordered him to Carlsbad. Rosebrier was for sale, too,—as Mr. Watson had determined, for good reasons, to buy Thornydale. Richard was depressed when he thought of the changes that his father's absence and a new place to live in might involve; but he had learned some good lessons. "I will be a man," he said, "and do my best."

"Let us be happy while we are together," said Mrs. Watson, kissing each of her little flock, "and leave the future to God. He will send us back to our children—safe!"

THE END

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